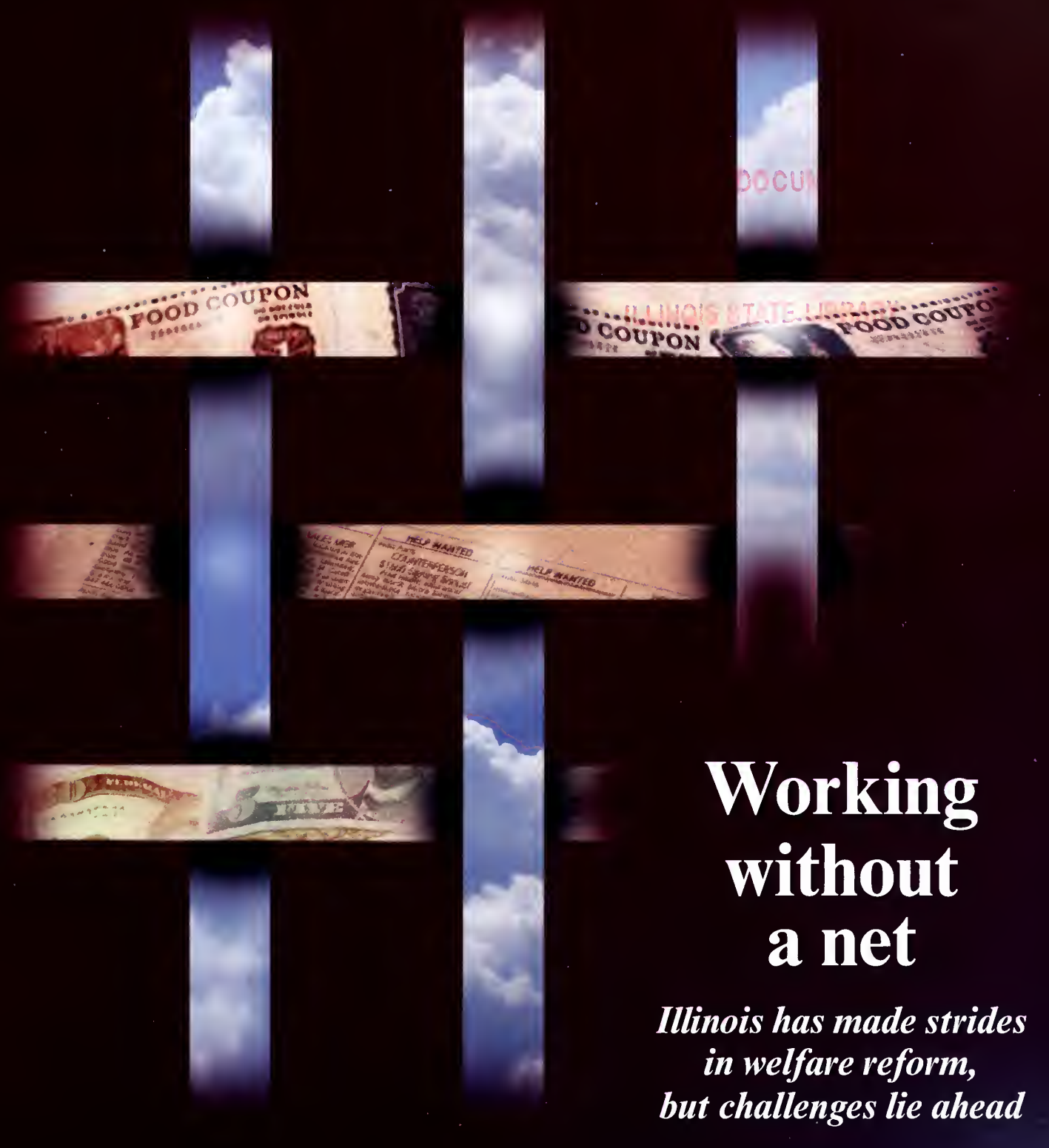


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# Illinois Issues

September 2001 \$3.95

*A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield*



**Working  
without  
a net**

*Illinois has made strides  
in welfare reform,  
but challenges lie ahead*

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So thanks for your subscriptions and your responses.

overall quality as excellent, and more subscribers found our coverage of the legislature in particular to be "very useful." We could not get a better compliment than that.

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Ed Wojcicki



## Read about yourself: active, educated, influential

by Ed Wojcicki

**Y**ou vote; nearly all of you do. You give money to political campaigns; most of you do.

Half of you have at least a master's degree, and most of the rest of you have a bachelor's degree.

We learned all of that in a recent survey of *Illinois Issues* subscribers. We are grateful to our business manager, Chris Ryan, for analyzing the results. It was our first readership survey in five years. I promised to tell you about those results, so I am summarizing them here.

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So thanks for your subscriptions and your responses.

Perhaps the best news for us was that our "favorables" went up between 1996 and 2001. They were strong five years ago but are stronger now. A greater percentage of subscribers rated our overall quality as excellent, and more subscribers found our coverage of the legislature in particular to be "very useful." We could not get a better compliment than that.

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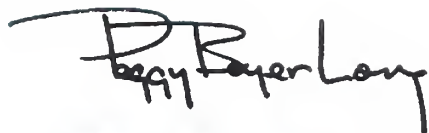
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## Illinoisans are on the front lines in a national revolution to reform welfare

by Peggy Boyer Long

**T**o many of us, welfare reform is a story about numbers: How many are still on the rolls; how many have found work. To some, it's a story about politics or history, the latest chapter in an evolving social policy.

That's to be expected. The new rules governing the unemployed poor don't touch most of us personally. Numbers, politics and history are more readily grasped. Still, what happens over the next year in Congress and the legislature will touch hundreds, if not thousands, of Illinoisans' lives.

This also is a story about personal change, and courage. And now is a good time to remember those who really are on the front lines in this national revolution.

"They got up before the sun and poured coffee at Dunkin' Donuts and McDonald's," Curtis Lawrence writes in this issue. "They found sitters for their kids and went off to unpack tractor parts in Peoria. Some even put down their needles and bottles and faced addictions head on. It hasn't been easy, but in the past four years these Illinoisans made the transition from welfare to work."

We asked Lawrence to take stock of the progress of this transition and to consider some of the hurdles that might lie ahead. His report begins on page 16. So far so good, he writes, but now the truly hard work begins.

Some 36,000 of the Illinois families who remain on the welfare rolls will have to find jobs within the next year. But, Lawrence reports, they present social workers with some of the toughest cases — severe drug dependency, myriad health problems and patterns of unemployment that have been entrenched for generations.

So policy-makers, too, will have their work cut out for them. In fact, this next phase of welfare reform will go to the core question: what to do with those who can't or won't work. State human services officials say they don't as yet have an estimate of how many unemployables there will be, but

everyone agrees these families will require the most creative solutions.

How did we get here? Five years ago last month, the nation scrapped its 60-year-old social safety net. The idea was that public dollars should be used to provide short-term help for the poor, not a permanent way of life. So Congress and the states gave most aid recipients a deadline to find jobs and get off welfare. The clock started ticking in 1997 and runs out this coming summer. That's when an unknown number of people will be kicked off public assistance for good.

Welfare watchers in this state will get their first hard look this fall at how Illinois' unemployed poor are faring in finding and keeping work. Lawmakers are due to get the second, and more detailed, phase of a six-year tracking study in November. Then state and federal policy-makers must begin to decide whether to reauthorize welfare reform or write another chapter in an evolving social policy.

In short, lawmakers will face some tough calls as they assess Illinois' numbers in the coming months. But now is a good time to remember, too, the personal challenges that go into changing a way of life, the courage required to stare down an uncertain economy and stretch a minimum wage check over the rising costs of food and housing. □



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# Illinois Issues

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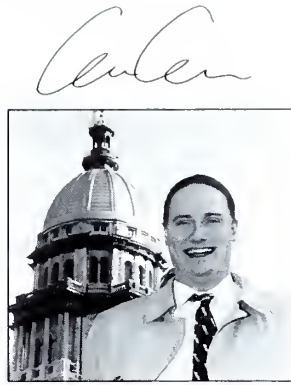
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*Credits: This month's cover was designed by art director Diana Nelson.*

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## Medicaid is eating up a greater share of the states' budgets

by Aaron Chambers

**M**edicaid expenses are booming. Illinois lawmakers know that. Now they know other states are dealing with the same problem.

At the National Conference of States Legislatures' annual meeting last month in San Antonio, legislators from all 50 states learned they're in the same boat. Across the board, Medicaid is eating up a greater share of the states' budgets. And the end is nowhere in sight.

"For state policy-makers, the challenge is how we're going to make it work," says Ray Hanley, director of the division of medical services at the Arkansas Department of Human Services. "We're challenged to sometimes take the same budget and find ways to cover more people."

Illinois officials have been looking for ways to do just that. Last December, Gov. George Ryan imposed \$47 million in cuts on pharmacies that serve Medicaid clients, an effort to close a hole in the budget devoted to providing health care for the poor. Ryan and the legislative leaders agreed to restore \$22 million in cuts as part of the \$53 billion budget accord they negotiated last spring.

They employed some clever accounting to fulfill that agreement. Budgeteers closed a \$270 million shortfall projected in the 2002 budget

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*Nearly 20 states reported  
to the National Conference  
of State Legislatures that  
Medicaid spending exceeded  
budget levels midway through  
the last fiscal year.*

with plans to boost claims for federal reimbursements and delay payments to health care vendors to about 30 days. The administration also intends to encourage broader use of cheaper generic drugs.

Illinois has company when it comes to the problem. According to the conference's latest fiscal report, nearly half of the 40 states that reported Medicaid data complained Medicaid spending exceeded budget levels midway through fiscal year 2001. By the end of that year, Medicaid spending grew by 14 percent over fiscal year 2000 in those 40 states. Originally, it had been budgeted to grow by 6.4 percent.

And the report says Medicaid spending in state budgets is expected to grow 8.7 percent, capturing the largest percentage of new spending, in fiscal year 2002. That's two to three times higher than projections in other

major categories: K-12 education (3.7 percent), higher education (3.6 percent) and corrections (3 percent).

There are several reasons for the increased costs of providing health care for the poor. As is the case for Illinois, other states are paying the price of recruiting more people to Medicaid. Plus, the states are dealing with expansion of eligibility, growth of the disabled population on Medicaid, escalating costs of prescription drugs, increased use of those drugs and overall health care inflation.

"It's the cost of services and changes in the patterns of utilization [of those services] that are largely responsible for the rising cost of Medicaid," says Cindy Mann, senior fellow at the Kaiser Commission of Medicaid and the Uninsured, a policy institute. "It is largely, though not exclusively, people with the most serious medical needs — the elderly, and particularly the blind and disabled — who will be responsible for most of the rise in cost over the next five years."

Mann, a panelist at the conference's seminar on Medicaid, says some states have frozen provider rates in an effort to keep Medicaid costs in check. She says others have reduced or restricted pharmacy costs, or increased state funding for the program.

And that last solution underlines the larger problem. In general, state budgets aren't as strong as they have been. According to the conference's fiscal report, an annual look at state budget activity, states' expenditures grew 9.1 percent in fiscal year 2001, while revenues grew only 4.5 percent. The analysis included 46 budgets; three had not been passed and one had been vetoed at the time the analysis was compiled in late July.

To make up the shortfall in fiscal year 2001, the report says 17 states tapped rainy day funds, tobacco settlement funds or other reserves, cut budgets, canceled or delayed capital projects, or increased state debt obligations.

"It's really a mixed picture," says Corina Eckl, director of the conference's fiscal affairs program. "It seems to be getting gloomier for most



states. The information that we've collected has some element of being a little bit overly optimistic at this point."

The states' aggregate balances — general fund ending balances plus rainy day balances — fell from \$43.7 billion in fiscal year 2000 to \$34.1 billion in fiscal year 2001, according to the report. Increasingly, rainy day funds are accounting for the bulk of total states' end-of-year balances.

Illinois' revenues, meanwhile, grew 3.7 percent from fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2001, while expenditures grew 6.1 percent, according to the state comptroller's office. The state's aggregate balance dropped \$391 million from \$1.5 billion to \$1.1 billion.

But the news from the states isn't all bad. The analysis also notes that 22 states reported budget surpluses. They made rainy day deposits, funded capital projects, cut taxes and targeted funding for specific programs.

The nation's lawmakers had other issues on the agenda during their five-day meeting.

**Privacy.** They debated whether public records such as documents filed in divorce proceedings should be made available over the Internet. Some lawmakers and privacy advocates voice concern that such records should not be readily available to anyone online. They're more comfortable when access to those records is limited to people willing to make the trip to the clerk's office.

"The idea is that somebody sitting at home drinking a six-pack of beer can know an awful lot about you just because they're interested in looking it up," Rep. Jeff Hatch-Miller, an Arizona Republican, told a group gathered to discuss the issue. "And do you want that to happen or do you want to maintain the relative obscurity that's created now by paper records?"

But Rebecca Daugherty, director of the Freedom of Information Service Center and another panelist on that topic, argues information about individuals and their dealings with government is important to the exercise of democracy. She cautions lawmakers to wait until problems arise and urges them to solve such problems

---

## ***States' budgets aren't as strong as they have been.***

***According to the conference, states' expenditures grew 9.1 percent in fiscal year 2001, while revenues grew only 4.5 percent.***

by punishing the use of the information, not restraining access to it.

"The Internet gives new information; it gives new ways of getting information. There's a lot of ability to access information [and] a lot more information to access," she says. "But you still only have 24 hours in the day and you still only have the same attention span. And if you're a middle-aged, middle-of-the-road person, you're still as uninteresting as you ever were."

**Election reform.** A special conference task force became the latest group to weigh in on election reform. In a report issued at the annual meeting, the task force recommended that each state adopt and disseminate a list of "voter rights and responsibilities." States also should develop a statewide voter registration database, according to that panel.

"The task force found that there are many good things happening with regard to the administration of elections," says Sen. Denton Darrington, an Idaho Republican and task force member. "The whole system, all throughout the United States, is certainly not flawed. But like most areas of state government, there is room for improvement."

The panel, which was formed after last year's presidential voting debacle, didn't take a position on voting equipment. It also didn't take a position on whether there should be a national holiday for voting, or whether felons who have served their sentences should have their voting rights restored. It did, however, recommend that states adopt uniform procedures for recounts. And it recommended that states place

renewed emphasis on voter education. Altogether, the task force made 36 recommendations.

According to the conference, legislatures entertained more than 1,700 election reform-related bills last spring, the session following the Florida recount ordeal. Of those bills, 241 were passed into law and 488 are still pending (10 legislatures are still in session). In Illinois, lawmakers introduced proposals that ranged from distributing voter guides to installing optical scanning devices on voting machines, but they failed to pass any major election reform legislation.

**Sales taxes.** In light of increased interstate commerce, some lawmakers fear retailers who sell online will grow tired of dealing with a patchwork of state laws and ask Congress to step in.

"It's as if our income taxes were still written for cash payroll," says Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, an Illinois Republican and co-chair of a conference committee studying the issue. "We've never really taken a lot of effort to modernize sales taxes."

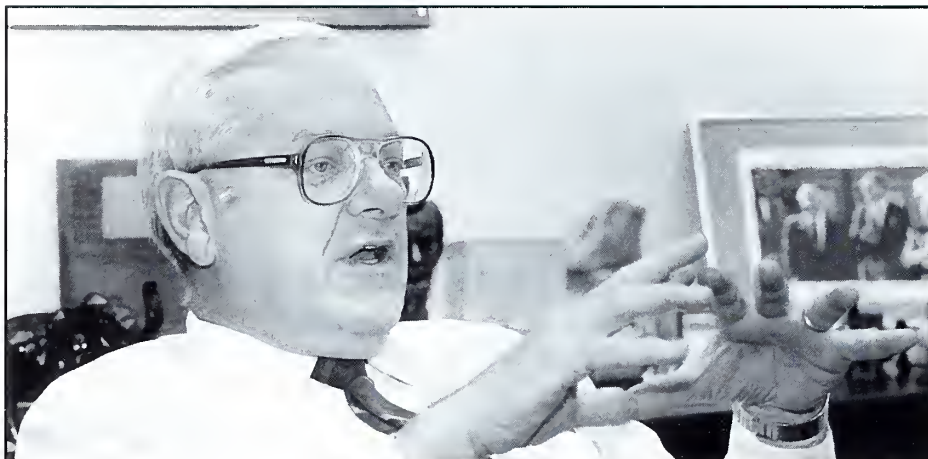
Congress is debating whether to extend a moratorium on Internet access taxes scheduled to be lifted next month. State legislators hope any continuation will provide them with authority to require remote vendors to collect sales taxes from residents on behalf of states. And they hope Congress won't go any further with federal mandates. Of course, states are losing a bundle on e-commerce sales taxes that aren't now collected.

At last, the legislators returned from San Antonio to their home states, constituents and issues. And some Illinoisans were immediately reminded of perhaps the most contentious public policy problem facing the states: lack of capacity at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. An American Airlines flight from San Antonio to O'Hare, carrying a few Illinois lawmakers and this reporter, was delayed for clearance to land. And once the plane touched down, it was forced to wait again for an open gate.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the plane's captain told passengers, "the congestion doesn't end ... here at O'Hare." □

# BRIEFLY

Edited by Rodd Whelpley



## Ryan chooses one term

### **Illinois' 39th governor may be remembered for his grand-scale style**

**G**eorge Ryan's first end-of-session party at the Executive Mansion was a night to behold. There was a band, a 60-foot table piled with food and, of course, more than enough booze for everyone. Many of the guests had waited eight years for that night — the teetotaling Jim Edgar, Ryan's predecessor, shied from alcohol and evening bashes — and they were ready to party. There was another reason to celebrate: Ryan had just convinced the legislature to pass the \$12 billion Illinois First public works program. After eight years of fiscal restraint, that looked like a pot of gold.

Ryan works in grand-scale style. Now, as he prepares to leave the governor's mansion, bringing to a close more than 35 years in public service, this Republican's career may well be remembered for the broad strokes, and for the sheer scope of his political talents. "When it comes time for consensus building, he has the skills to bring people together, not getting his ego too far in front of it, and working out a compromise when most people fail," says Tony Leone, a lobbyist and longtime friend of Ryan's. "He does it time and time again."

Consider the end of this most recent legislative session. Just days before lawmakers' May 31 deadline, Ryan and the legislative leaders stood outside the

governor's office bickering about who would get what in a proposed \$50 billion state budget. But when the group emerged from that office a couple of days later, they had in hand a \$53 billion budget with something for everyone. Ryan had helped broker a new stadium for the Chicago Bears, an \$800 million expansion for Chicago's McCormick Place convention center, \$3.5 billion in incentives for the state's coal industry, and \$52.5 million in tax breaks and other incentives for the Boeing Co. He also saw that 51 percent of new revenues were dedicated to education, a campaign pledge.

But, like a hangover from an end-of-session party, Ryan has had to face the

consequences of what went down the night before. His governorship was plagued from the beginning by a bribery scam that occurred while he was secretary of state. It turns out some of his employees were boosting Ryan's campaign kitty by selling driver's licenses to unqualified truckers. Some of those truckers have been involved in highway accidents, one of which killed six children. Ryan has not been charged with wrongdoing and has denied any knowledge of what his employees were doing in his name, but the steady parade of convictions proved to be a persistent headache for the Ryan Administration. Then, a longtime associate of Ryan's, Dean Bauer, the man Ryan had tapped to root out corruption, pleaded guilty to obstructing the federal investigation into license selling.

While Ryan's spokesman says the scandal wasn't a factor in the decision not to seek another term, there's no question the governor will avoid what promised to be an ugly campaign. Whatever his personal reasons, Ryan gave up a public career that encompassed the Kankakee County Board, the legislature and three statewide offices.

The silver lining for Ryan may be that he's given himself political room to make a few more grand-scale moves during the remaining 16 months of his term. Topping the list: resolving the state's airport capacity crisis. Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley has proposed expanding O'Hare International Airport; Ryan, who wants to build a new airport in Peotone, has promised to submit his own plan. There could be a compromise in the works.

"There are challenges ahead that will require all of our talents," the governor told a crowd of 1,000 people gathered last month in his hometown of Kankakee to hear his decision. "We have a lot of work to do."

Ryan isn't wasting time. Two days after that speech, he used his amendatory veto to push for gay rights. The



move was both politically courageous and procedurally bold. Ryan returned to the legislature a bill that would have prohibited discriminating against motorcyclists by restricting access to public places. He added references to sexual orientation, thereby drafting a bill that would prohibit discrimination against gays and lesbians. Such a proposal, backed by the governor, previously died in the Senate. Quoting Abraham Lincoln, Ryan wrote that “our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.” The governor concluded, “That is what I believe also — no more, no less.”

Ryan may have exceeded his constitutional powers in changing the subject matter of the legislation to promote his belief. But reworking the motorcyclist bill wasn't Ryan's first bold move. A proponent of the death penalty, he declared a moratorium on Illinois executions after a series of wrongful convictions came to light, and he was the first governor to lead a mission to Cuba.

“I think the George Ryan philosophy is not ‘us against them,’” says Andy Raucci, a veteran lobbyist and attorney. “It’s ‘us — we’re all in this together.’”

There are likely to be a number of bold moves over the next year and a half. And that final end-of-the-session party could well be a night to behold. *Aaron Chambers*

## QUOTABLE

“If we’re to be successful, we need to listen more and shout less. We need to moderate our positions. I learned a long time ago that winning public office is about addition and not subtraction, and I would hope that the party folks are listening.”

*Gov. George Ryan admonishing his fellow Republicans to resist the views of the “hard right wing” of their party. He made the comments August 8 in his hometown of Kankakee while announcing he would not run for a second term.*

## Three decades of public service

**February 24, 1934:** George Homer Ryan was born in Maquoketa, Iowa.

**1935:** Ryan moved with his family to Kankakee in the heart of northeastern Illinois.

**1954-56:** Ryan served in the U.S. Army.

**1962-90:** Ryan joined his family's pharmacy business. He has said he gained his understanding of people and their problems while working behind the counter.

**1966:** Ryan, a Republican, was appointed to the Kankakee County Board. Kankakee is a tight-knit political community. Republican State Sen. Edward McBroom ran things and was Ryan's first political mentor, showing the young pharmacist how to use the Manteno Mental Health Center to dole out patronage jobs.

**1968:** Ryan was elected to the county board, later becoming its chairman.

**1972:** Ryan was elected to the Illinois House, where he collected new political allies. Republican Speaker W. Robert Blair, for one. Blair offered Ryan an entry into leadership that most freshmen lawmakers are not afforded.

**1977-81:** Ryan served as House minority leader.

**1981-83:** Ryan served as House speaker. During his tenure, he made a procedural ruling that essentially ensured the defeat in Illinois of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Pro-ERA activists were so incensed that they wrote his name in blood on the floor of the Capitol rotunda.

**1983-91:** Ryan served as lieutenant governor during James Thompson's administration.

**1991-99:** Ryan served two terms as secretary of state. During his tenure in that office, he won passage of the 0.08 law, which lowered the permitted blood alcohol level for drivers.

**1998:** Ryan won a narrow match for governor against Democrat Glenn Poshard. During that campaign, the public heard the first reports of a possible license-selling scam in the secretary of state's office.

**January 11, 1999:** Ryan was sworn in as Illinois' 39th governor. On his agenda was the promise to spend 51 percent of all new state revenue on schools and the pledge to rebuild the state's transportation infrastructure. The \$12 billion Illinois First construction program was approved that spring. To accomplish that goal, though, Ryan also had to win increases in liquor taxes and license plate fees. The move put him on a collision course with conservatives in his party. In October of that year, Ryan became the first governor to lead a delegation to Cuba.

**January 31, 2000:** Ryan, a proponent of the death penalty, declared a moratorium on Illinois executions. Thirteen people had been released from Death Row after it was discovered they had been wrongly convicted. Ryan said he wouldn't reinstate the ultimate sanction until he could be sure the system was fixed. The move garnered international acclaim. In May 2000, Ryan led a trade delegation to South Africa and met with former President Nelson Mandela.

**January 17, 2001:** Dean Bauer, a friend and the former inspector general in the secretary of state's office under Ryan, pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice as part of the federal Operation Safe Road probe into license selling. Thirty-eight people have been convicted in that investigation.

**August 8, 2001:** Ryan announced he will not seek a second term as governor.

### FOCUS ON CONSERVATION

#### Federal ag law debate under way

Efforts to boost conservation funding will be at the center of this fall's congressional debate on a new federal farm law.

That's good news for Illinois, environmentalists say. This state faces a \$63 million backlog in requests to participate in the federal Department of Agriculture's popular conservation programs, the largest of which pays farmers for not planting on environmentally sensitive land.

Still, the move to boost those programs could hurt this state. Illinois also has been one of the top beneficiaries of traditional ag programs that benefit growers of corn, wheat, rice and cotton. And some farm groups worry any increase in conservation funding might siphon money from such subsidies.

Over the next few months, Congress is expected to decide how to balance both needs as it shapes federal farm policy for the next decade. Though the current farm law doesn't expire until next year, U.S. House and Senate leaders are moving quickly to preserve the generous allotment for agriculture in the fiscal year 2002 budget resolution. The 1996 legislation, "Freedom to Farm," was aimed at weaning farmers off government subsidies. However, low crop prices led Congress to approve more than \$30 billion in bailouts in recent years, and that has helped spur an early review of agriculture policies.

The House Agriculture Committee, made up primarily of farm-state lawmakers, approved a bill in July that departs dramatically from the free-market philosophy that prevailed in 1996. It would not only maintain two existing subsidy programs, but create a new \$43 billion program to pay farmers when prices fall too low. The \$168 billion proposal also would increase conservation spending from \$2 billion

to \$3.7 billion a year.

However, a key battle will come on the House floor when a coalition of urban and suburban House members and others from states that historically haven't received much farm aid seek to boost conservation funding. This push to expand conservation programs is coming primarily from states in New England and the West, where farmers are more apt to grow fruits and vegetables or run dairy farms.

"There is a growing resentment across the country in regards to who's benefiting from the farm programs and who's being left out," says Rep. Ron Kind, a Democrat from Wisconsin who has proposed a bill to provide \$8 billion a year for a variety of farm conservation efforts.

Illinois wouldn't lose out under the move, contends Environmental Defense attorney Scott Faber. "Boosting conservation doesn't take money away from farmers. It just makes federal money available to a wider variety of farmers."

Only a third of the nation's farmers are eligible for traditional subsidy payments, which are restricted to certain crops. Conservation funds have no crop restrictions.

The Senate Agriculture Committee has yet to produce a bill, but Chairman Tom Harkin, an Iowa Democrat, has said he wants to boost funding to reward conservation practices on working farms. Currently, about 85 percent of federal conservation funds are paid to farmers to idle their land. Some estimate Harkin's proposal would provide as much as \$6 billion for conservation programs.

Leaders in both chambers hope to get a bill to the White House by Christmas. A lot will be at stake for Illinois farmers over the coming months.

*Dori Meinert  
Copley News Service, Washington, D.C.*

### THE GOV WANNABES

The field is likely to be crowded in the race to replace George Ryan.

As of late summer, the following politicians had announced intentions to run for governor, were considering doing so, or had had their names mentioned as possible contenders.

#### Republicans

- Patrick O'Malley, a state senator from Palos Park.
- Jim Ryan, Illinois attorney general and former state's attorney of DuPage County.
- Nathan Peoples, a Chicago businessman.
- Corinne Wood, Illinois lieutenant governor and former state representative from Lake Forest.

#### Democrats

- Michael Bakalis, a former state comptroller and the last elected state schools superintendent. He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1978.
- Paul Vallas, former Chicago public schools chief and executive director of the legislature's Economic and Fiscal Commission.

- Rod Blagojevich, a U.S. representative from Chicago and a former state representative.
- Roland Burris, a former state attorney general and state comptroller who practices law in Chicago. He was an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1998.
- Richard Devine, Cook County state's attorney.
- Louis Lang, a state representative from Skokie.
- Patrick Quinn, a former state treasurer and citizen activist who pushed the Cutback Amendment that reduced the size of the Illinois House.
- John Schmidt, a Chicago attorney and former U.S. Justice Department official. He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1998.
- William Daley, former U.S. secretary of commerce and the brother of Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Southern Illinoisan Glenn Poshard, the Democrats' standardbearer last time around, has taken himself out of the running.

Candidates must file their nominating petitions in December for the March primary.



## REMAP REDUX

### Pols pass the buck to Lady Luck

Lawmakers will allow the most partisan of official duties to be decided by the luck of the draw, and likely a court battle — or two.

The General Assembly must redraw the state's legislative and congressional maps once each decade to account for changes in the state's population. Lawmakers settled on a congressional map during their spring session, but after failing to strike a deal on a legislative map, they deferred the decision on the shape of the state's House and Senate districts to a special eight-member commission. But the commission, evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats, also took a pass, meaning a ninth member must be chosen by lot to give one party or the other the edge.

"We always like to be optimistic, but a lot of times optimism doesn't turn out to be factual," says Sen. Vince Demuzio, a Carlinville Democrat and the commission's vice chair, when asked why the panel had been unable to strike a deal despite months of rhetoric.

*The constitutional* tie-breaker provision was designed to motivate politicians to come to agreement rather than risk their careers in a lottery. But with each party controlling one chamber, this was difficult to accomplish. Legislative strategists apparently calculated that chance — or court action — could in fact improve the chances of winning a favorable map.

Meanwhile, individual legislators now have even less control over their futures. In recent years, the four legislative leaders have concentrated more power in their own hands. Redistricting underscores that trend. This year, rank-and-file lawmakers had limited access to secure rooms where staff members were drafting the leaders' proposed maps.

Rep. Tom Cross, an Oswego

Republican and chairman of the remap commission, even deferred to the leaders when asked whether commissioners had tried to strike a deal, or whether the four caucuses had exchanged model maps. "That's more of a leadership thing," he said. "I'm not privy to that."

So the commissioners are waiting for Secretary of State Jesse White to add to their number by randomly drawing the name of Democrat Michael Bilandic or Republican Ben Miller, both retired Illinois Supreme Court justices. He has until September 5 to do that. Then the real action can begin. By October 5, the panel must file a redistricting plan approved by at least five members. The next day, or shortly thereafter, the losing party will presumably challenge the winning map in court.

*And that may be* what everyone's really waiting for. The Illinois Supreme Court has original jurisdiction in redistricting matters. Officially, judges make decisions — redistricting decisions being no exception — on the facts and the law. But observers contend that judges tend to fall back on party affiliation when considering a political map. That would work well for the Democrats, as the high court has five Democratic and two Republican justices.

The map will need to be available before candidates can file their primary nominating petitions with the State Board of Elections. This year, that will be December 10-17. The high court has in the past handled remap litigation on an expedited basis, but the filing deadline was postponed in 1991.

Meanwhile, the remap process itself is under fire. Three Republican lawmakers filed suit in U.S. District Court in Rockford, contending the tie-breaker provision violates due process by imposing an arbitrary solution. The plaintiffs are trying to steer the map to federal court, which is regarded by some as more

Republican-leaning. A group of Democrats countered, asking the Illinois Supreme Court to declare the provision constitutional.

The new congressional boundaries also face litigation. U.S. Rep. David Phelps, an Eldorado Democrat whose district was dissolved (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 8), challenged the map in Saline County Circuit Court. He argues the state Constitution, which requires legislative districts to be "compact, contiguous and substantially equal in population," should also govern congressional remaps.

Attorneys for Phelps argue that standard is higher than the one provided for in federal law.

Aaron Chambers



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## Bovine beauty

Cows will be on parade again, but this time in Springfield. An exhibition of the work of George Atkinson, who documents family-owned dairy farms (see *Illinois Issues*, December 2000, page 14), is scheduled at the Illinois State Museum from September 22 through January 13, 2002. Atkinson, who also works in the state's Art-in-Architecture program, has witnessed life on dozens of farms in the Midwest and records scenes fast disappearing from the rural landscape.

## GOVERNOR'S ACTION

### Approved

**Phones** Lauded as one of the most pro-consumer measures ever enacted, the state's new telecommunications law strengthens regulators' abilities to push for easier access to the \$3.6 billion local phone market.

**Coal** The ailing coal industry gets a \$3.5 billion boost. The new law offers financing and tax incentives to developers who build generating plants at mines. The dollars will help pay for scrubbers to clean pollutants emitted from existing coal-fired plants and subsidize transmission lines.

**Boeing** The company gets \$52.5 million in tax breaks and other incentives as part of a deal designed to lure the aviation giant's corporate headquarters to Chicago. The state's share is nearly \$30 million; the city must kick in the rest. Boeing decided to move to Chicago before the measure passed. The law offers similar incentives to other large companies to relocate to Illinois.

**McCormick Place** Chicago's convention center gets \$800 million for an 800,000-square-foot addition. The expansion will be financed with bonds backed by existing Chicago hotel, restaurant and car-rental taxes.

**Pensions** The state's 2,400 highway maintenance workers now will be eligible for retirement at age 50 with 25 years of service or age 55 with 20 years of service.

**Reckless driving** The secretary of state now can deny driving

privileges to anyone younger than 18 who is charged in connection with a car accident that causes death or serious injury.

**Drunk drivers** Repeat offenders must install ignition interlock devices that determine whether the driver is sober before the vehicle will start.

**Cyberstalking** Using electronic communication to transmit a threat of bodily harm, sexual assault, confinement or restraint is now a Class 4 felony, punishable by one to three years in prison.

**Birth control** Hospitals must inform sexual assault victims they can get emergency contraception by taking a heavy dose of birth control pills after intercourse.

**Ecstasy** The club drug is officially bad news. The new state law requires prison terms of six to 30 years for people who sell more than 15 grams and expands the scope of the "drug-induced homicide" offense to include delivering any controlled substance that results in a user's death.

**Baby drop** Mothers can relinquish their babies without fear of criminal prosecution.

**Bullies** Schools must draft policies to deal with this problem.

**MTBE** The petroleum-based fuel additive must be phased out of Illinois gas over three years. Ethanol, a corn-based additive, already holds 90 percent of the state's additive market.

**Drug-free cops** State troopers or correctional officers who test positive for a controlled substance will be fired. Both groups were already bound

by a similar condition in contracts their unions negotiated with the state.

**Hispanic history** Public schools must include this ethnic group among others whose roles and contributions to the United States are taught in American history class.

**Halal** The Department of Agriculture will ensure that all food so labeled was prepared according to Islamic law.

### Vetoed

**Gays** The governor changed a bill prohibiting discrimination against motorcyclists into a measure that prohibits discrimination against gays and lesbians. A gay rights proposal, backed by the governor, previously died in the Senate. Lawmakers could override the amendatory veto.

**Death penalty** Gang-related murders won't be added to the crimes eligible for capital punishment if the governor's veto stands.

**Lincoln Library** The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency won't oversee the \$115 million Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library after it's completed if the governor's amendatory veto stands.

**Hemp** The University of Illinois won't be permitted to study industrial hemp production if the governor's veto stands. The bill, he wrote in his message to lawmakers, "plays into the national strategy of groups seeking to remove existing criminal penalties for cannabis/marijuana possession and use."

Aaron Chambers



## Blooms a boon in the fight against lead poisoning

With an ability to suck lead into their roots, sunflowers are front-line warriors in Chicago's battle to remove toxic metal from soil around homes.

Chicago leads the nation in the number of lead-poisoned children, says Dr. Helen Binns, a pediatrician at Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago who specializes in such research. The city's Department of Public Health identifies each year more than 20,000 of the city's children age 6 and younger who have lead in their blood at levels high enough to cause permanent damage. Lead paint dust, leaded gasoline and emissions from factories are the most likely causes of contaminated soil.

A two-year, \$900,000 study funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and co-directed by Binns and Kimberly Gray, a Northwestern University engineering professor, will test how much lead is removed. The plants will be composted off-site in the fall.

*Beverly Scobell*

## WEBSOURCE

### Is welfare to work working?

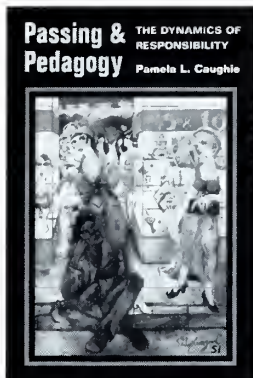
August marked the fifth anniversary of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, which requires those receiving aid to find work. Several online sites provide a picture of how the law has worked, and not worked, for the public it serves.

For a national perspective, go to the Welfare Information Network at [www.welfareinfo.org](http://www.welfareinfo.org). That site links to the Illinois Welfare Information Network. Or go directly to [www.iwin.org](http://www.iwin.org) for policies and research specific to Illinois.

The IWIN site contains links to reports on completed and ongoing studies that track how people are faring under the reforms. Reports cover child care issues and the relationship between domestic violence and welfare.

*Beverly Scobell*

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**Census 2000****How Illinois stacks up**

Statistic	Illinois	U.S.
Population growth	8.6 percent	13.2 percent
College graduates	27 percent	25.1 percent
Median age	34.7	35.4
Average household size	2.67	2.61
Mean time to get to work	27 minutes	24.3 minutes
Below poverty level	11.4 percent	12.5 percent

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Updates****Ecology and art**

- Lake County officials moved to protect more than 7,000 isolated wetlands in northern Illinois, a response to the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that removed federal protections for such habitats and to the failed effort to implement state safeguards (see *Illinois Issues*, July/August 2001, page 25).
- A settlement reached in the long-running internal feud at the Terra Museum of American Art may keep the institution in Chicago for the foreseeable future (see *Illinois Issues*, December 2000, page 9).
- The U.S. Census Bureau reported that 2.4 million, or 7 percent of the nation's children live with grandparents, which is a 19 percent increase since 1990 (see *Illinois Issues*, January 1999, page 28).

**POLLINATION CRISIS****Mite infestation stings state's bees**

Shoppers buying Illinois fruit at markets and roadside stands this month might be aware of the role bees play in pollination. But few would know that predatory mites on bees could cause what one researcher calls a "pollination crisis," affecting the availability and cost of produce.

Stewart Jacobson, a research specialist at the University of Illinois at Springfield, says the state's honey-

bees, which pollinate apples, peaches and other fruits, are threatened by two parasites: the tracheal mite and the varroa mite.

The tracheal mite invades bees' respiratory systems. It can reduce a hive's honey production in the warm months and can easily kill a hive during the winter by hampering a colony's ability to stay warm. Beekeepers have found ways to combat the tracheal mite, but feral colonies are untreated and more susceptible.

The varroa mite, a much larger and more dangerous predator, feeds on adult bees and pupae. And they've already become resistant to the most common pesticide remedy.

If kept hives are any indication of the status of the honeybee population as a whole, then mites may be a growing problem. According to Jacobson, last winter many beekeepers lost 70 percent or more of their colonies.

In recent years, the loss was 10 percent to 20 percent. In fact, the pervasiveness of mites has hampered professional beekeeping in Illinois. In 1998, there were 2,900 registered beekeepers in the state. By 1999, that number had dwindled to 1,295.

That decline is changing the way some crops are grown. Illinois farmers who produce pumpkins on 3,400 acres near the Libby Canning Factory in Morton have hired area beekeepers to bring hives into the fields for pollination each July since 1997 (see *Illinois Issues*, October 1997, page 10), though Libby Agriculture Manager Tom Laatsch says area bees have made a slight comeback.

John Bouseman at the Illinois Natural History Survey's Center for Economic Entomology posits another theory, though, for the decline in Morton's bees. He thinks changing agricultural practices may play a part. Specialized hoary squash bees (*Pepouapis pruinosa*) that only pollinate pumpkins and squash were abundant in the area 20 years ago, says Bouseman. He suspects increased use of center pivot irrigation systems in the area may have allowed more farmers to grow corn and soybeans, crops that don't rely on bee pollination. Fewer acres of pumpkins may have driven hoary squash bees to look for other nectar, he suggests.

The issue is more than theoretical. Statewide, agriculture department figures from 1999 show that Illinois farmers relied on honeybees to pollinate the state's \$15.7 million apple and peach crops, as well as other fruits.

With grants from the Illinois Department of Agriculture's sustainable agriculture program and the Illinois Council for Food and Agricultural Research, Jacobson and his colleagues are looking for economically viable ways Illinois' beekeepers can produce queen bees and colonies for pollination and for keepers to replace or expand their hives. Now, most keepers buy their bees from producers in the South. In that region honeybee colonies are at future risk for having "killer" bees and for bringing in additional pests such as mites.

Rodd Whelpley



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*For the first time this fall, welfare watchers will get a hard look at how Illinois' unemployed poor are faring in finding and keeping work. Lawmakers are due to get the second, and more detailed, phase of a six-year tracking study in November. And that's when the hard work will begin — for policy-makers as well as recipients.*

*Five years ago last month, the nation scrapped its 60-year-old social safety net. The idea was that public dollars should be used to provide short-term help for the poor, not a permanent way of life. So Congress and the states gave most aid recipients a deadline to find jobs and get off welfare. That clock will start to run out next summer.*

*At the same time, federal and state policy-makers will face a significant deadline of their own. They must decide whether to reauthorize welfare reform or overhaul government's social support system once again.*

*Writer Curtis Lawrence takes stock of the progress so far and assesses some likely hurdles in the coming year.*

*The Editors*

## Working without a net

Illinois has made strides in welfare reform. But with less than a year before the clock starts running out, the most difficult challenges lie ahead

by Curtis Lawrence

They got up before the sun and poured coffee at Dunkin' Donuts and McDonald's in downtown Chicago. They found sitters for their kids and went off to unpack tractor parts in Peoria. Some even put down their needles and bottles and faced addictions head on. It hasn't been easy, but in the past four years these Illinoisans made the transition from welfare to work.

They were on the front lines of a national movement. When Congress and the states abolished the country's 60-year-old social safety net, replacing it with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the idea was that government aid should provide only short-term help, not a

permanent way of life. And Illinois' social services program, funded through an annual \$585 million federal block grant and state funds of \$430 million, seems to be working. Since 1997, this state has trimmed more than 104,000 people from its welfare rolls. And most observers agree — even those who were skeptical about welfare reform from the start — Illinois has made great and compassionate strides.

But with less than a year left before the clock runs out on a five-year deadline for the unemployed to go to work or to identify a barrier that stops the clock, the state's most difficult challenges lie ahead. The remaining 36,000 families subject to

time limits on public assistance present social workers with some of the toughest cases — severe drug dependency, myriad health problems and patterns of unemployment that have been entrenched for generations. Beyond that, there are many unanswered questions about those who have left the rolls. Some are simply unaccounted for. And even those who have landed minimum wage jobs work at the whim of an uncertain economy.

Some of those questions will be answered in the second phase of a six-year tracking study, due to state lawmakers in November. For the first time this fall, welfare watchers will get a hard look at how the

## The law

Under the previous system, the federal government shared the cost of social welfare, but attached strings to the dollars. Under the new system, established in 1996, states have the authority to determine who qualifies for welfare, and how much they will receive.

Illinois, which funds its program through an annual \$585 million federal block grant and state funds of \$430 million, adopted the federal guidelines of two years to find work and a total of five years for aid. However, up to 20 percent of the recipient population may be excluded from the five-year limit. And this state's Work Pays program, one of the first of its kind in the nation, allows recipients to keep \$2 of each \$3 earned and provides continued medical coverage, child-care support and food stamps. Most important, the welfare clock is stopped while a recipient is working. In addition, caregivers who must stay home to care for spouses or children will now be able to keep their benefits and extend their deadlines for aid.

Aside from those provisions, Illinoisans on welfare must work or take part in a training program for 30 hours a week. Two-parent families must work a total of 35 hours a week. Recipients also must keep appointments with their caseworkers and stay clear of trouble with the law.

unemployed have fared in getting — and keeping — jobs. Yet, next summer is when the toughest phase of the nation's welfare-to-work experiment will begin. In Illinois, depending on who is asked, hundreds of people are expected to run out of time and get kicked off welfare for good.

Officials in the Illinois Department of Human Services estimate that fewer than 100 people will exit welfare permanently in July, the first month of the five-year deadline. Each month after that, the number exiting is expected to be the same. Advocates for welfare recipients think the number could be much higher.

Whichever calculation proves most correct, it's clear that welfare reform has and will change many Illinoisans' lives. And in the months leading up to reauthorization of the

federal welfare regulations next summer, politicians, activists and recipients will be trying to weigh the extent of that change. They'll review reams of studies and reports filled with public testimony as they assess the first phase of the reform movement and attempt to chart the course ahead.

*So far, the results* of those studies and reports have been mixed. Dan A. Lewis, a Northwestern University professor of education and social policy who is tracking welfare recipients for the state, and John Bouman, the National Center on Poverty Law's deputy director for advocacy, both say Illinois has taken the high road to welfare reform. Indeed, this state's policies have evolved. A decade ago, in the early days of his administration, former Gov. Jim Edgar began by cutting off aid to unemployed men. In more recent years, the state has been praised for its progressive policies, especially

when compared to other states. Those policies, which include allowing recipients to keep some pay without jeopardizing public aid, were initiated, too, by Edgar's administration.

"When Congress gets to the reauthorization bill, Illinois will be a leader in the Work Pays approach," says Lewis. He's the lead investigator for the University Consortium on Welfare Reform, which is comprised of Northwestern, Northern Illinois University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the Chicago Urban League and the Metropolitan Chicago Information Center. "Rather than being punitive, there are supports built into the Illinois approach," Lewis says.

Illinois' Work Pays program, one of the first of its kind in the nation, allows recipients to keep \$2 of each \$3 earned and provides continued medical coverage, child care support and food stamps. Most important, the welfare clock is stopped while a recipient is working.

Because of this strategy, Illinois' rolls remained full early in the welfare experiment, while other states were lopping off high numbers of people. But Illinois has been catching up.

*Individuals on welfare* in this state must work or take part in a training program for 30 hours a week. Two-parent families must work a total of 35 hours a week. Recipients must also keep appointments with their caseworkers and stay clear of trouble with the law. The first snapshot of Lewis' research, released late last year, showed that the majority of the study group — 53 percent — was employed. Of those who were employed, 38 percent had full-time jobs. Most recipients worked about 33 hours and the median hourly wage for the group was \$7 an hour.

Nevertheless, the study revealed some gaps in the system. Of those who had left welfare, 42 percent said they found jobs or that their earnings became too high to qualify. But another 27 percent said they lost their benefits because they missed appointments or failed to file paperwork. As many as 41 percent of the recipients in





the study became ineligible for Food Stamps or Medicaid at some point.

The second round of interviews for Lewis' study was completed in late July, and his second report will be ready in November. These results, which will provide more targeted demographic information than the first study, are expected to help the state fine-tune problems, especially for the most troubled recipients.

Meanwhile, another study released by the state a little more than a year ago revealed some problems as well. That study reviewed 137,000 cases that were closed between July 1997 and December 1998. It was prepared by the Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Springfield in collaboration with the School of Social Work at the university's Urbana-Champaign campus.

The results of the review were mixed. About a third of the cases were closed because families increased their incomes, another third were closed because families didn't cooperate with the human services department, and another 14 percent were closed for other reasons. No reasons for termination were given for 21 percent of the cases.

At the same time, recipients reported a number of obstacles to joining the workforce. While the state has been given high marks for child care, 40 percent of those surveyed by the University of Illinois reported trouble finding baby sitters. Lack of transportation and difficulty finding jobs close to home also were cited. Further, only 37 percent of those surveyed had worked continuously in the six to eight months after leaving welfare, while 48 percent worked inconsistently.

Those findings raise concerns about recipients who drift in and out of employment. "There is going to have to be a set of services and supports to keep people in the labor market," Lewis says. "You don't want an accident or a family health emergency to cause someone to tumble out of the labor market and fall back into the welfare cycle."

There are other issues, too. Many of those who are keeping steady work

are in service industry jobs with little chance of promotion, says state Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, a Chicago Democrat. "I think there is a concern that many of the people on welfare are people whose skill levels tend to be low," says Currie. "I think we have not done so well on the job training front and certainly not done anything on the job creation front."

Despite progress, Bouman of the National Center on Poverty Law says the jury is still out on Illinois' reform efforts. "In a couple of areas, I think Illinois has done very well and is a leader nationally," says Bouman, whose organization is not known for heaping praise on governmental institutions. "Illinois has done an immense amount to reward, support, and [provide incentives for] work activity."

He gives Illinois high marks for reforming its child care system in the early days of welfare reform. According to the human services department, state spending for child care has skyrocketed from \$263 million in fiscal year 1997 to a projected \$681 million for fiscal year 2002. But Bouman is less kind toward the state's Work First strategy, which he and other critics say encourages caseworkers and their supervisors to push the single-minded goal of getting people into the first available job. Those who don't comply are met with sanctions and face losing part or all of their cash benefits and possibly their food stamps.

Bouman says one of the recipients he works with, Margaret Ferguson, is a perfect example of why a one-size-fits-all approach won't work. Ferguson first came into the world of welfare shortly after her son, Conlan, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when he was 2, a condition that impairs muscular power and coordination. Conlan, now 15,



## The numbers

- Since 1997, 104,402 Illinoisans have left the welfare rolls.
- The remaining 36,000 families who face time limits present social workers with some of the toughest cases — severe drug dependency, myriad health problems and patterns of unemployment that have been entrenched for generations.
- State officials expect that next July, about 100 people will run out of time and get kicked off welfare for good. They expect the number exiting each month after that to be similar. Advocates for welfare recipients aren't as optimistic. They believe the number of people who will get kicked off welfare could be much higher.

also suffers from autism, a disorder of the brain that affects physical, social and language skills. His health problems cause him to miss an average of 40 days of school each year, which makes it nearly impossible for Ferguson to hold down a steady job. Nonetheless, she says her caseworkers had insisted she work 30 hours a week to keep her benefits.

"Welfare reform cannot be achieved by suiting legislation to a utopian ideal that the disabled, caretakers of the disabled or other needy parties will somehow disappear from society," she says.

Recently, the department agreed. The agency adopted a new provision that allows caregivers who must stay home to care for spouses or children to stop their clock and continue to receive benefits. Similar waivers may have to be made in other cases.

More difficult problems may lie ahead. State Sen. Barack Obama, a Chicago Democrat who also says it's far too soon to get high hopes about the welfare-to-work program, worries for instance about a worsening economy. "I think that for a number of states the numbers look good on first viewing simply because the economy has been so wonderful," says Obama, who co-sponsored legislation to track the success of those leaving the welfare rolls. He says he wants to see more of those statistics before he credits the program as a success. "There's a significant number of people who are counted as being kicked off welfare rolls, but those folks are no better off in terms of finding jobs."

**Policy-makers** are likely to face a number of tough calls over the coming months. Indeed, the next phase of welfare reform will cut to the core question: what to do

## The challenges

- Forty percent of recipients in one survey reported trouble finding baby sitters. Lack of transportation and difficulty finding jobs close to home also were cited. That survey was prepared by the Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Springfield in collaboration with the School of Social Work at the university's Urbana-Champaign campus.
- According to the University of Illinois study, only 37 percent of those surveyed had worked continuously in the six to eight months after leaving welfare, while 48 percent worked inconsistently, raising concerns about recipients who drift in and out of employment.

with those who can't or won't work?

State officials say they do not as yet have an estimate of how many unemployables there will be, but these families will require the most creative solutions, says Toby Herr, director of Project Match on Chicago's near West Side.

Since 1985, Herr's program has served some of the city's hardest-to-place workers, many of whom live in public housing. Unlike some, she doesn't favor increasing the number of people exempt from work requirements. "A lot of advocates say just exempt people," Herr says. "I would say that nobody should be exempt from some obligation." But Herr says that obligation must be fine-tuned to meet the needs of this special population. And, she adds, some hard realities will have to be addressed. "Right now there's no middle ground," she says. "You either work or you don't, and everybody is not going to work the first time around."

As an alternative to working right away, Herr favors tough requirements that track parents' progress in getting

their children to medical appointments and after-school events such as scouting or tutoring. Attendance would be monitored and verified, similar to a work or training program. Herr's thought is that once parents find they can get organized around a schedule for their children, they can translate these skills to a work environment.

State Sen. Dave Syverson, a Rockford Republican who chairs the Senate Public Health and Welfare committee, also thinks of welfare reform as "tough love." He says ultimately there will be two groups left on the welfare rolls. One will be those who are disabled and cannot work and whom we have a moral obligation to support. "There are some, however, [for whom] the opportunity was there and albeit difficult, [who] chose not to fully take advantage of it," Syverson says. "I don't believe we should treat both of those populations the same."

Human services Secretary Linda René Baker says the state plans to continue the support programs that have earned praise from welfare watchers, including a provision that stops the clock for teen parents as long as they stay in school and the newly enacted regulation that allows caretakers to keep benefits while caring for children or spouses.

"I think it's a matter of making certain we have the right kind of policies working with TANF families as we drill down into the case load," says Baker. "The test for us will be how we manage these existing cases and making sure they have the right kind of support."

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*Curtis Lawrence is a Chicago Sun-Times reporter who writes about housing and urban issues.*

## The sources

Studies and resources cited in this article are available on the Internet.

- For information from the University Consortium on Welfare Reform, go to [www.jcpr.org/wpfiles/IFSsummaryreport.pdf](http://www.jcpr.org/wpfiles/IFSsummaryreport.pdf).
- For information on the study by the University of Illinois, go to [://lipa.uis.edu/publications/tanf\\_finalrpt\\_execsummary.pdf](http://lipa.uis.edu/publications/tanf_finalrpt_execsummary.pdf).
- The National Center on Poverty Law is located at [www.povertylaw.org](http://www.povertylaw.org).



# Growing pains

One small Illinois River town is at the forefront of a national demographic trend. And while the rising Hispanic population has delivered economic gains, it also has brought social change

by Lisa Kernek

Photograph by T.J. Salsman



*Girls wait outside the St. Alexis Catholic Church in Beardstown for their First Communion. Beardstown's Hispanic population grew 2,000 percent between 1990 and 2000, more than doubling the congregation.*

**I**t's Sunday morning and there's standing room only at St. Alexis Catholic Church in Beardstown. Young Mexican immigrant families overflow the pews, the aisles, the balcony and even the foyer. As the Rev. Gene Weitzel blesses communion bread and wine, a nun translates into Spanish. Between prayers, musicians strum an acoustic guitar and rattle a tambourine. There's no organ music here.

At a time when shrinking congregations threaten the existence of many rural churches, attendance has doubled at St. Alexis since Weitzel became pastor 12 years ago. It's a boom for which Weitzel



*Archie Henry and his son, Chris, 4, were among those attending Cinco de Mayo festivities in downtown Beardstown. Henry moved to Beardstown four years ago from Mexico.*

claims no credit, and one for which he was completely unprepared.

The 74-year-old, white-haired Anglo pastor traces the surge in his congregation to the Excel Corp.'s 1987 purchase of a shuttered hog meatpacking plant. The company recruited workers from Mexico and transformed this Illinois River town of 5,766 people about 45 miles west of Springfield.

"They kind of trickled into town," Weitzel recalls of the immigrants' arrival. "I realized that we really had to get on the ball."

Beardstown is in the heart of Cass County, where a nearly 2,000 percent increase in the Hispanic population between 1990 and 2000 was the steepest rise in the state, U.S. Census Bureau figures show.

Nationally and in Illinois, Hispanics were the fastest-growing minority population throughout the 1990s, with by far the largest share of immigrants coming from Mexico. Although most of this state's Hispanics still call Chicago home, during the past decade they have increasingly moved to suburban

and rural communities, drawn by manufacturing and agriculture-related jobs.

In addition to Beardstown, central Illinois has seen rising Hispanic populations in Decatur, home of the Archer Daniels Midland soybean-processing plant, and in Arcola, which counts two broom factories among its major employers. These rural immigrants, many of them young and raising children, are reinvigorating graying communities.

In Beardstown, Hispanics are buying homes and have opened businesses. Su Casa, a Mexican restaurant and grocery store, sells Mexican-brand tortillas, sodas and other items to the immigrants, while drawing Anglo customers.

"Before the population came, Beardstown was a small, dying town," says Kevin Kleinschmidt, a grandson of German immigrants who has lived just outside Beardstown all his life. "Five, six years ago, you could go down to the square. It would be deserted. Now it's bustling all day long."

For Kleinschmidt, the arrival

of Mexicans by the hundreds over the last decade has been good for business. His insurance agency has a growing Hispanic clientele, prompting him to enroll in a Spanish class at a community college.

Along with prosperity, though, the influx has brought growing pains. The Hispanic school enrollment, for instance, climbed from 21 in the fall of 1995 to 274 last year. In the 1,300-student system, 20 percent need classes taught in Spanish until they become more proficient in English. In response, the district has had to hire 16 teachers and aides.

Further, a shortage of rental housing has spurred newcomers to crowd into single-family houses. This summer, the city cited a homeowner after discovering 22 people living in a single house.

Meanwhile, police officers and health care providers struggle to communicate with the new residents. "The language barrier is the toughest," newly elected Beardstown Mayor Bob Walters says. "That's the biggest problem we have in a small community not used to any minorities at all."

Immigrants who have encounters with the police or must go to court are often assisted by Dominican nun Renee Lawless, a Jacksonville native who had spent 30 years in Peru. She was recruited by Beardstown's St. Alexius parish about four years ago.

St. Alexius Catholic Church is often the first stop for newly arrived immigrants, many of whom come with few belongings. The church basement now houses a free "store" stocked with secondhand clothing, bedding and dishes.

Lawless spends much of her time doing social work, making home visits to Beardstown's Hispanic newcomers and acting as an interpreter. On a recent afternoon, she knocked on the storm door of an old two-story house. Veronica Avila, a 29-year-old Mexican immigrant, warmly greeted her in Spanish and ushered her into a tidy living room where lace and artificial flowers decorated the used furniture. Avila's 16-month-old daughter slept soundly on the sofa.

"They had nothing here when they



came," says Sister Renee. The church procured the family's used refrigerator, kitchen chairs, beds and bookshelves.

Like many of the Mexican immigrants in this community, the Avila family first learned about the jobs at Beardstown's Excel plant while working at a meatpacking plant in Columbus Junction, Iowa.

Throughout the 1990s, economic restructuring in major rural industries, particularly in meatpacking, led to a wave of Hispanic migration to small towns in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and Illinois, according to a 1997 report by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University in Macomb. The workforce isn't the only change. Oscar Mayer, the previous owner of Beardstown's pork plant, employed unionized, predominantly white males; Excel is nonunion, and about one third of its 1,984 workers are Hispanic.

One year after arriving here, Veronica Avila is working evenings at Excel while her husband Juan works the day shift for a compact-disc manufacturer in Jacksonville. They live with their five young children in a rambling house that Juan is renovating.

The church helped establish their home, but what Avila most values is the cultural connection the church provides: "The church keeps us as a Hispanic group together," with celebrations of feast days and holidays, she says in Spanish as Sister Renee translates. "It's not easy to leave your homeland to come to a strange country with different customs."

Just before kissing Sister Renee goodbye, though, Avila calls her "a bridge between the Hispanics and the Anglos."

While St. Alexius was among the first to offer social services to the immigrants, other agencies and businesses have begun to reach out to the newcomers. And Mayor Walters says he hopes to involve more immigrants as community volunteers in such efforts as the new "adopt-a-block" cleanup program. The city hired its first Hispanic police officer this year, and the local newspaper just launched

a Spanish-language edition.

Despite these strategies to draw the newcomers into the community, signs of ethnic tensions are not difficult to find. "The resentment is kind of subtle," the Rev. Weitzel says. That resentment has surfaced in letters to the editor in the English edition of the *Cass County Star-Gazette*. Local residents contend, for example, that Hispanics don't pay taxes. Weitzel countered in his own letter to the editor that immigrants pay income taxes and, even if they're renters, the rent they're paying goes toward property taxes.

Indeed, Weitzel has become an outspoken advocate for the Hispanic population. And his views don't sit well with some of the other residents. "The whole town of Beardstown is bending over backwards" to help the immigrants assimilate, says Michelle Fryer, an Excel employee and the 20-year-old daughter of a Philippine immigrant. "He seems to have forgot whose home this is and why we feel so run over. If you come to our country, you should learn our language."

Mayor Walters, too, accepts only so much change. Like Fryer, he has no plans to learn Spanish. "This is the language I speak. When in Rome, you do as the Romans do."

Such tensions took an uglier turn in 1996, when a Mexican immigrant allegedly killed a white resident in the El Flamingo tavern and fled to his home country. The night after the shooting, a cross was left burning outside the bar. Six days after the shooting, arson destroyed the El Flamingo.

Locals blamed the murder on a love triangle — the victim was a friend of the ex-husband of the immigrant's live-in girlfriend — not ethnic problems. In the wake of the incident, however, Hispanic and white residents formed an alliance to promote racial harmony. The group was the result of a meeting organized by church leaders where about 60 people gathered to discuss the tension. Beyond such visible flareups, the two communities remain segregated. A picnic last spring marking Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican military holiday, was one of the rare occasions when Hispanics

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*Throughout the 1990s, economic restructuring in major rural industries, particularly in meatpacking, led to a wave of Hispanic migration to small towns in Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska and Illinois, according to a 1997 report by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University in Macomb.*

and Anglos socialized.

Still, immigrants make up 11 percent of the country's population, the largest share since the 1930s, the Census Bureau reported last month. And the struggle to make room for these newcomers is happening in small towns like Beardstown.

The Mexicans' immigrant experience is similar to that of earlier Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrants, says Ben Mueller, a University of Illinois Extension specialist in Champaign who runs a Spanish-language radio program for Hispanic immigrants. With time, Mexicans buy homes in their adopted communities, join churches and speak fluent English — in short, they become part of the middle class.

"Those things are happening," Mueller says. "We just have to be a little more patient."

That message resonates in Beardstown. "It's always them and us, is kind of the feeling amongst a lot of the people," Mayor Walters says. "By interacting, we'll overcome some of the differences. It's not like they're going to just disappear, because that's just not going to happen." □

*Lisa Kernek is a general assignment reporter at the Springfield State Journal-Register, where she has tracked census-related issues, including the Hispanic population boom in Beardstown.*

# SCHOOLS AREN'T JUST FOR KIDS

*Educators are rethinking and redesigning school buildings,  
transforming them for wider public uses*

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by Ken O'Brien  
Photographs by Jon Randolph

When is a schoolhouse more than a schoolhouse?

Some Illinois educators have considered that question. Among them are officials at Will County's Lincoln-Way Community High School District 210, who have concluded that a schoolhouse should be a community center, too. To prove the point, they opened their Frankfort and New Lenox campuses to the general public. Area residents can take laps in the pool at the crack of dawn. Throughout the day, they can circle the track while students take classes a few yards away. And in the evenings, when the local park districts offer adult programs, they can lift weights or play volleyball.

In fact, Lincoln-Way represents a growing trend by practicing a concept called "schools as centers of community." School districts across the country are rethinking and redesigning school buildings, transforming them for wider uses.

Proponents argue the move makes sense. It promotes partnerships among schools, park districts, libraries and municipalities. That means local dollars can be stretched further. And, though it's not often stated outright, the concept offers cash-strapped districts a politically palatable argument for raising school construction funds. After all, tax-

payers might be more willing to ante up if schools aren't just for kids.

Certainly, the timing couldn't be better for a different approach. As student enrollments rise throughout the country, school officials are looking for a more effective and efficient strategy for building new schools or renovating old ones, forcing some to offer more than an outstretched hand. "I think the country as a whole is aimed toward smart growth, and community planning of schools and thinking of schools as centers of community enables smart growth," says Barbara Worth, a spokeswoman for the Council of Educational Facility Planners International, an Arizona-based group that promotes innovative ways to develop schools. "The school becomes a resource for lifelong learning. If a school can have an enhanced library that the community also uses, it certainly helps the students because it gives them more than what they would normally have. Or maybe a school is built adjoining a park and that park can be the playing field for students and citizens. The student has a much better facility and the community makes use of that, so it is a win-win situation."

Here in Illinois, the State Board of Education doesn't track this trend. It's "strictly a local decision," says board spokeswoman Kim Knauer.

Still, she says, the agency is aware that more school districts are keeping their buildings open later on weeknights and opening them on weekends to accommodate the public.

Chicago's school system, the largest in the state, put the idea to work in 1999 when it opened Sandoval School in the Gage Park neighborhood on the city's Southwest Side. The school, built to relieve overcrowding in that community, is the first joint effort by the Chicago Board of Education and the Chicago Park District to serve a city neighborhood. Sandoval has a gym, a multipurpose room, an art room and two computer labs. It's located next to Senka Park, which has playground equipment, basketball courts, an inline skating rink and a jogging trail. The park district operates the 14-acre park and has an office in the school, where it offers recreation programs on weekends and on weekdays until 9:30 p.m.

Such efforts have the support of the federal government. Three years ago, the U.S. Department of Education convened a national symposium of educators, planners and architects on better ways to build schools, and the conference produced guidelines on ways to turn them into community centers. "The school building of the future needs to be designed as a learning center for the entire





*Officials at Will County's Lincoln-Way Community High School District 210 have concluded that a schoolhouse should be a community center, too. To prove the point, they opened their Frankfort and New Lenox campuses to the general public, enabling area residents to use the pool.*

community and involve many more members of the community in the school's design and planning," wrote Richard Riley, then the U.S. secretary of education, in the forward to the 50-page guide, which was published in 1999.

Federal officials offer reasons to support their contention. The U.S. education department estimates that America's public and private school age population, from kindergarten through high school, will increase from 52.7 million in 1999 to 53.4 million in 2004. Building enough schools for these students will be expensive. The U.S. General Accounting Office reported in 1996 that just repairing or renovating

existing schools in the country to produce a "good overall condition" would cost \$112 billion. Undoubtedly, that five-year-old cost estimate would be revised upward today.

Local officials have moved to meet the need. Since the GAO issued its report, there's been a school construction boom, says Joe Agron, editor of *American School and University* magazine. Last year, he adds, a record \$21.5 billion was spent on school construction projects for K-12 throughout the country. In Illinois, with help from the state's new school construction grants and with dollars from Gov. George Ryan's Illinois First program, 177 new schools were built over the last

three years, according to the Illinois Capital Development Board. And classrooms have been added at many others.

At the same time, school officials have made space for services traditionally delivered elsewhere in the community. For example, Evanston High School added a medical clinic, while Antioch High School built a senior citizens center on the site of its new administrative offices.

Still, most American schools, according to the U.S. education department, were designed as stand-alone facilities. The public has limited access to the theater, the library, the cafeteria or sports equipment. And the buildings stand empty evenings

***"A revolution in school design" has hit planners' drawing boards in recent years, says Steven Bingler, president of Concordia Inc., a New Orleans-based architectural firm, and co-contributor to a federal guide on turning schools into community centers. More schools, he says, are being designed to give the public easy access to key areas.***

and weekends.

That could change in the near future, though. "A revolution in school design" has hit planners' drawing boards in recent years, says Steven Bingler, president of Concordia Inc., a New Orleans-based architectural firm, and co-contributor to the federal guide. More schools, he says, are being designed to give the public easy access to key areas. "More and more often, gymnasiums are being designed with direct access from the outside so that after school and on weekends that facility can be used as a community fitness center," Bingler says. "Auditoriums, especially for high schools and middle schools, are being designed with direct access from the outside so they can be performing arts centers. A lot of communities are saying, 'Why are we building a public library when down the street we're building a school library with the same books?'"

The trend toward multiuse school-houses is taking root in the Chicago suburbs, where growth has produced a regional school construction boom. Officials in Aurora West School District 129 renovated their only high school, creating a technology plaza that students and district residents use. They even allowed Starbucks to

open a branch at West Aurora.

The federal guide identified 10 schools that incorporated innovative designs, two of which are in Illinois. One is Crow Island School in Winnetka, an elementary building that opened in 1940. That school was credited with having a flexible design that allows for wider use of technology. The John B. Drake School in Chicago also was cited. That school, built in 1898 and decommissioned in 1978, was rehabbed and re-opened in 1998 as a vocational transition center, containing science labs and computers.

In addition, officials at Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire got high marks in the guide for their efforts to make their building a center of activity. In 2000, Stevenson also drew the attention of the Arizona-based school development council. The group, which held its annual school building ceremony at Stevenson, chose the Lake County school because Secretary Riley was visiting Chicago that day and because the school was undergoing an innovative renovation project, says Worth, the council's spokeswoman.

Stevenson completed an expansion this fall, adding classrooms and improving the library and cafeteria. Those facilities offered another opportunity for residents in the district to take advantage of the building, including access to the computer labs, a field house and a pool. "We are what brings so many communities together because we draw students from 17 towns," says principal Dan Galloway. "We're open from 6 a.m. to midnight seven days a week. You never come to this parking lot and see it empty, unless it is 3 a.m.," he says. "We function as a high school in the day and like a park district in the evening."

This way of thinking about schools is apparent in other Illinois districts. Officials of Carbondale Community High School District 165 embarked on a new building project in 1998 without being aware of the trend, says Superintendent Steven Sabens. Nevertheless, district officials followed the concept. That district's

building project was a joint effort of the schools, the city and the park district. The new high school, middle school and other facilities are part of a "Super Block," which will include athletic fields and an exercise path on a 150-acre site. The park district and the middle school will be able to use the new facilities as well the public, which also will have access to an auditorium, Sabens says. As part of a negotiated agreement, the city, which draws visitors as the home of Southern Illinois University and as a regional shopping venue, hiked its local sales tax, earmarking the annual \$800,000 for the project. That agreement also helped the district win overwhelming approval of a referendum to build a \$28 million school, which will replace a 78-year-old building in the fall of 2002. The district, which secured an \$11.2 million state construction grant, will return \$800,000 a year in tax abatements to homeowners.

"We really approached the building of the school and the recreational facilities [as though] it needed to be a community affair, a community event," Sabens says. "It needed to be a facility [that is] open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day if need be. Our thought was that a family, moving to Carbondale with young children, would actually grow up at the Super Block."

The idea is likely to spread. The Chicago school system, for instance, plans to continue recasting schools as community centers, says spokeswoman Carolyn Tucker. That city is in the midst of a \$2.6 billion school building and renovation campaign. Sandoval was among 15 new schools that Chicago opened since launching the campaign in 1996. "We want to make our schools more accessible for education as well as for recreational programs," Tucker says.

But long before there was a name for the approach, and long before there was a set of federal guidelines for implementing it, Lincoln-Way adopted a philosophy that embodies the principle. In 1992, the school board scheduled a \$27 million referendum to build 45 classrooms,





*Lifeguard classes are offered to the public at Lincoln-Way school in Will County.*

two field houses and a new auditorium at the campus in Frankfort. District officials promised residents they would be able to use the new facilities if the measure passed.

"The board and our superintendent [Lawrence Wyllie] wanted our taxpayers to be involved and to enjoy what they were paying for," says Lincoln-Way spokeswoman Stacy Holland. "One of the things that we told people when we went around talking about the referendum was that we wanted them to understand that this was not just for students. We said the days were gone when a high school closed at 4 p.m. and the buildings stood there and weren't used."

The referendum passed and the school board kept its word when the

facilities opened in 1994. In 1998, the district successfully lobbied for a second referendum, at \$60 million, which provided money for 100 classrooms, an auditorium and a pool for each campus. Those facilities, which include separate changing rooms for adults at the pools, were completed in 1999 and 2000.

Over the past decade, Lincoln-Way opened the schools to groups in the district's four towns, Holland says. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts meet there, the four chambers of commerce hold their business expos at the campuses and the five elementary feeder districts hold graduation ceremonies at Lincoln-Way. In addition, three churches hold services at the New Lenox campus, while another church uses the

Frankfort campus. Community theater groups stage their productions at the auditoriums, and a local orchestra will hold three concerts in the Lincoln-Way buildings during the new school year.

"It has been good for the community," Holland says of Lincoln-Way's open-door policy. "It is a very strong philosophy of service to the community in everything that we do. We just want this school district to be looked at as an educational center, but we're also a community center."

In the coming years, it's likely more school officials will subscribe to that philosophy. □

*Ken O'Brien is a free-lance writer for the Chicago Tribune.*

# Cutting edge

Illinois is poised to buy a glass house. Experts say it's unusual for the public to preserve modern architecture. Yet if the sale goes through, this state will own two of the most famous houses built in the 20th century

by Daniel C. Vock

*Photograph by Jon Miller at Hedrich Blessing*



It can be described as a fishbowl on stilts or a jewel set in a forest.

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe designed the Farnsworth House as a place of solace where the elements of nature meet the ideals of modern architecture. And in many regards his house has always been a place where opposing forces meet.

Even architects love it or hate it. That heated response reflects a clash of aesthetics and ideology. Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, America's most famous architect, attacked the house and similar projects as the work of "totalitarians" who "were not

wholesome people."

Mies' house also reflects the tension between artistic vision and more practical considerations. Mies once led a German art school founded on the principle that "form follows function." Yet this steel-and-glass building came with huge heating bills, swarms of bugs and precious little privacy. In fact, Edith Farnsworth was so disillusioned with her retreat home, she sued Mies. When she lost in court, she resorted to attacks in the press.

Others lined up behind Mies' bold project, though. "To acclaim him for the monumental purity of his form and

yet deplore his buildings' malfunction in some pragmatic details, is rather like praising the sea for being blue while chiding it for being salty, or admiring the tiger for the beauty of his coat while urging him to become a vegetarian," opined the architectural scholar James Marston Fitch.

Now the state of Illinois is poised to spend at least \$6 million to buy a house whose very appeal rests on such contradictions. Illinois would become the proprietor of what is known in architecture circles as one of the most revolutionary buildings of the last century. But, of course, this mission



presents yet another contradiction: a building commissioned as an inexpensive weekend retreat for a single person used as a museum for visitors from across the globe.

That was the idea of a group of leading patrons, artists and critics who urged the state to buy the residence. The group included famed architect Helmut Jahn, John H. Bryan, who chairs the Art Institute of Chicago and the Sara Lee Corp., and former Gov. James Thompson. They joined forces last spring to persuade the state to jump at the chance to buy the house, the only Mies house in the United States.

They succeeded. But even in this there are complications. The dollars to buy the house aren't readily apparent in the new state budget. Staff in the governor's office will only say that the administration inserted enough money for the purchase in the final budget agreement — somewhere. And there are other hurdles to overcome before the property can pass from private to public hands: two appraisals and an acceptable price.

Still, architecture buffs are ecstatic. If the state successfully acquires the property from Lord Peter Palumbo, they argue, the integrity of the site can be maintained. Visitors will always have access to one of Mies' most famous works, located 50 miles west of Chicago along the Fox River in Plano.

"[The house] raises the question of what makes a great house: one that is admired by everyone else or one that makes the client happy," says Donald Hallmark, site manager of the state-owned Dana-Thomas House, which was designed by Wright.

Thus far, the Dana-Thomas House in Springfield is the only house museum operated by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency that was acquired solely because of its architectural merit. The Farnsworth House would put the agency in charge of two of the most famous houses built in the 20th century.

Nancy Schamu, executive director of the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, says Illinois' willingness to take over the Farnsworth House is unusual because the property is so modern and because its sole importance is its architectural value. She hopes Illinois citizens are

proud of the proposed purchase. "In another 50 years, they'll be even prouder. It's a cutting edge thing for the state to do."

Indeed, Thompson lobbied hard on behalf of the Friends of the Farnsworth House to promote the acquisition during the spring legislative session. He also was responsible during his own administration for the state's purchase of the Dana-Thomas House 20 years ago last month.

Wright designed that Springfield mansion for Susan Dana in 1904. Today, the state owns more than 95 percent of all the pieces Wright designed for the house — the most complete example of Wright's prairie-style houses around.

Thompson says it's important for the state to preserve the properties. "It's part of our culture, part of our heritage."

Mies fans admire the Farnsworth House because of its simplicity. The bare-boned structure is considered an icon of the International Style, which Mies helped define with his mantra, "Less is more." After World War II, architects abandoned traditional trappings on the premise that a building's structure should be ornament enough. The philosophy marked a turning point in architecture. It was the genesis of the steel and glass skyscrapers that dominate city skylines today.

Nothing is hidden in the Farnsworth House. It's a glass box hovering above a meadow between two platforms. It wears its steel skeleton outside the exterior walls, exposing both structure and inhabitants.

***The state's plans*** for the house, on the other hand, are anything but straightforward. Nowhere in the 1,173-page budget passed by lawmakers last spring is there a specific outlay for the purchase. Still, Gov. George Ryan stands behind the project and has vowed to find the money. "There are a number of capital project funds from which it could come," explains Ryan spokesman Dennis Culloton. "The administration is committed to this project."

According to Culloton, the state will fund the initial purchase, but the private

sector will be asked to provide operating funds. But Thompson disputes that. He says the agreement also calls for the state to allocate money for operating expenses, while a not-for-profit group would support the house museum by acquiring artifacts and providing equipment, much as it's done at the Dana-Thomas House.

Whoever ends up paying the upkeep of the Farnsworth House will be charged with maintaining a rectangular structure almost 29 feet wide and more than 77 feet long. Eight steel supports hold up twin steel decks that run parallel to the ground. The floor is a little more than five feet off the ground; the ceiling is 9.5 feet above the floor. An open patio and glassed-in living quarters sit between them. Steps and a terrace lead up to the all-white house from the clearing where it sits. There are no doors or partitions inside the house, except for the bathrooms and maintenance area at its core. One area runs freely into the next, much as the boundaries between the house and the surrounding woods are nearly erased.

Originally, the house came without curtains for its floor-to-ceiling windows — one of the complaints Farnsworth voiced to Mies about her weekend retreat. That means visitors can see outside the house no matter where they stand. "If you view nature through the glass walls of the Farnsworth House, it gains a more profound significance than if viewed from outside," said Mies, who died in 1969.

The house is set on a 60-acre plot and surrounded by woods. Although it is sometimes possible to see the house from the Fox River, on land the building is obscured from view by the foliage. "Here, where everything is beautiful and privacy is no issue, it would be a pity to erect an opaque wall between outside and inside," the architect explained.

Visitors often walk away awed. Many describe the experience in religious terms. "It's almost a shrine or a temple more than a house," remarks Franz Schulze, a Lake Forest College professor who wrote *Mies van der Rohe: A Critical Biography*. "It almost has an apparitional effect, as if it's levitating above the ground."

Joseph LaRue, a volunteer tour director for the Chicago Architecture Foundation who leads groups through the house, says visitors, most of whom are familiar with the house before seeing it, "go through it with a sense of awesome respect."

"It's perfect, aside from its impracticality," he adds. "It's a puzzlement [to figure out] how it's beautiful."

Hallmark says he was struck by characteristics shared by the Farnsworth and Dana-Thomas houses. "There is a great deal of similarity in feeling between them," he says. Both houses are dominated by horizontal components, he notes, and both use layering extensively.

In fact, initially there was a great deal of respect between the two architects, says Schulze. Early in his career, Mies studied and admired Wright's work. Wright sought out Mies when the German moved to Illinois. But slowly their philosophies shifted and the two found little in common by the time the Farnsworth House was built.

Farnsworth first met with Mies about building the house in 1945, when he was designing the campus of the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. The house was completed in 1951.

The architect had already risen to prominence in his native Germany,

where he was the last director of the Bauhaus, a well-known art school and laboratory dedicated to developing the "building of the future." Mies took the reins of the school in 1930 and decided to move it from Dessau to Berlin. Shortly after the Nazis took control of Germany, police searched the school and shut it down. Mies fled the country in 1937 and came to Chicago.

His name would soon become synonymous with his adopted home. After the Farnsworth House, he would go on to shape the Chicago skyline with such structures as the twin apartment buildings at 860 and 880 Lake Shore Drive, the federal complex in the Loop and the IBM Building just north of the Chicago River on State Street.

**The state** is still in negotiations with Palumbo, a collector of architecture who currently owns the Farnsworth House, about the price and conditions of the takeover. Palumbo and the state must decide, for example, how much, if any, furniture will come along with the house.

The historic preservation agency is waiting for those negotiations to conclude before it moves on plans for the house, according to spokesman David Blanchette. Then the agency will be able to draw up a timetable for

opening the house and proceed with possible restorations.

In 1997, floodwaters destroyed much of the interior of the building, though it stands above the ground specifically to avoid flooding. After the disaster, Palumbo restored the house and opened it to tours to cover the costs.

That restoration could prove to be a blessing to the state, Hallmark says. Even with Thompson's personal interest, it took the agency 10 years before it finished restoration of the Dana-Thomas House.

If the agency decides Palumbo's restorations match its vision of how the house should be presented, the state could avoid a large bill for doing the restorations itself. But Hallmark cautions that the staff at the Farnsworth House will have to do a comprehensive study of the site before making any renovations. They'll have to decide what stage of the 50-year-old house's history the state wants to depict.

In his first days at the Dana-Thomas House, Hallmark faced the task of turning a former corporate headquarters into a house museum. "Everybody wanted to spruce it up ... but you shouldn't go into fixing things if you don't know what was there [at the time of the renovation date]," he says.

There's another obstacle the state didn't face when it took over Wright's house. Because Farnsworth wasn't talking to Mies at the time her house was completed, she didn't fill it with furniture he designed or planned to include with the house. "We'll simply have to go out into the market and find the best examples of mid-20th century furniture ... the kind that belongs in the house," says Thompson, who headed efforts to buy original pieces from the Dana-Thomas House with private funds. In any event, Mies was less particular about what went into his house than Wright. He would often use pieces from previous residences to furnish later houses, says Hallmark.

Whatever the pending obstacles, Thompson says he's grateful Ryan and the legislative leaders signed off on the takeover. "Not many states would do it." □

*Daniel C. Vock is the Statehouse bureau chief for the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin.*



## For More Information

The Bauhaus-Archiv Museum of Design [www.bauhaus.de/english/index.htm](http://www.bauhaus.de/english/index.htm)

Two current, major exhibitions of Mies' work at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum in New York [www.moma.org/mies/](http://www.moma.org/mies/)

A three-dimensional view of the Farnsworth House (downloadable plug-in required) [www.GreatBuildings.com/buildings/Farnsworth\\_House.html](http://www.GreatBuildings.com/buildings/Farnsworth_House.html)

A dated but informative overview of the Farnsworth House [www.design-engine.com/news/farnsworth/index.html](http://www.design-engine.com/news/farnsworth/index.html)

Knoll Furniture's explanation of Mies' famous Barcelona Chair, which it produces [http://www.knoll.com/news/story.jsp?story\\_id=1021](http://www.knoll.com/news/story.jsp?story_id=1021)

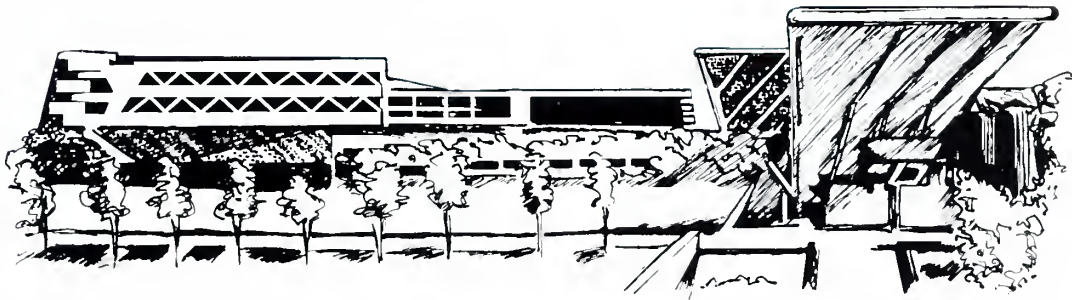
The Chicago Architecture Foundation hopes to continue offering tours of the Farnsworth House during the transition period. Call (312) 922-3432, ext. 240, for more information.



# SONY FIELD ANYONE?

*The bottom line in the debate over remaking the Bears stadium is neither architectural nor ecological. It's global*

By Alf Siewers



Driving along Chicago's Lake Shore Drive south of downtown can be a bit like touring a set for Disney's animated film "Atlantis." How the heck did those ancient Greeks get over here to build all of these Classical temples anyway?

That's one of a number of ironies in the campaign to save Soldier Field: Lakefront preservationists are fighting for the architectural integrity of a massive triumphal monument on Chicago's supposedly "forever open, clear, and free" Lake Michigan shoreline, a landmark built in a style that our region's most renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright despised as un-Chicagoan in a space that famed lakefront designer Daniel Burnham envisioned as a public meadow.

In fairness, today's lakefront advocates aim to prevent a redesign from flying too far afield. They're fighting plans to plop a giant saucer atop the classic structure, an addition that would enable the Bears to pack even more well-heeled pro-football fans into the stadium and an aesthetic statement that perhaps only Wright in

his latter, more experimental days might have liked.

Yet the bottom line in this debate over Mayor Richard M. Daley's push to remake the venerable stadium is neither architectural nor ecological. It's global. Globalization, the postmodern morph of corporatization, is a word that in the main has yet to be spoken in Chicago politics, but, like the ghost of Hamlet's father, it seems ever before us these days. And what it portends is the death of place.

More than a metaphor, though, the Soldier Field controversy is metonymy, the thing itself: Chicago's civic war memorial transformed into a corporate ad in an architectural language that speaks of no place in particular and bears little connection to the natural or human surround. The proposed addition might just as well be some modernist McDonald's perched on a stone-pillared building in Addis Ababa or Aberystwyth, Wales.

In an age when major financial interests, and their political acolytes, no longer look to local resources for staying power, corporate and political

allegiances to even nascent regional traditions will get trampled in the interest of profits.

Wright, ever the advocate of decentralized suburban living, on his off days might have appreciated the proposed stadium redesign, inward-looking as it is, and suitable for corporate "sky" boxes. But in the main, the glory days of the so-called cultural Chicago Renaissance at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries featured at least a bow on the part of capitalism to the primacy of a civic life, and a recognition on the part of the community that such primacy was deserved. Even Wright made a nod to communalism with his attempts to promote land-sharing cities.

But, then, what makes Chicago Chicago, what constitutes a civic life, in a day when Frango mints are made out-of-state, when the small manufacturing that sustained city neighborhoods has largely left in search of cheap labor, when many longtime corporate headquarters have decamped to someplace else, when the mayor has moved from his ancestral community of Bridgeport to a gentri-

fied downtown subdivision, when Maxwell Street Market has been replaced by townhouses, and when *Bozo's Circus* has been cancelled by a local media company turned national conglomerate?

And, really, in an era when our leaders have turned from the notion of a civic sphere to embrace a global marketplace, who, after all, has a franchise on the Bears, or, for that matter, a memorial to local World War I veterans? Viagra Field anyone?

Chicagoans, an insular bunch who generally prefer discussing what's going on at the next street corner, or at most in the next ward, to what's happening in the World Trade Organization or the European Union, have yet to get this news: The noise from Seattle and Genoa over the global economy were but the first disturbances in a new neighborhood.

What, after all, is not for sale these days, and what local treasures are city leaders unwilling to pawn? More particularly, what should we fight to preserve in an increasingly placeless world in which a flying-saucer Soldier Field will fit right in? DaimlerChrysler Field anyone?

The new \$580-plus million stadium plan proceeds apace, despite sharp attacks and lawsuits by some preservationists and civic leaders. Under a new 30-year lease between the Chicago Park District and the Bears, the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority, a public agency, will pay \$1.5 million a year for capital improvements and \$3.5 million a year for operations and maintenance.

The Bears, garnering all revenues from tickets, skyboxes, club seats, game parking, snacks and drinks and souvenirs, and stadium advertising, will pay \$4.7 million a year in rent, and \$1 million to use a new underground parking garage. In addition, team owners are required to cover the cost of any overruns on stadium construction and follow city minority contracting rules.

Financial details aside, preservationists seem shocked that Mayor Daley, the Green Man of City Hall, could have been in on this out-of-scale project. Even Lois Wille, a former Chicago journalist who wrote the definitive book on local lakefront

preservation in 1972, titled *Forever Open, Clear, and Free* after the wording of an early lakefront Chicago land charter, came out of retirement to trash the new design, though graciously excusing "the distinguished architect Dirk Lohan" for facing an "impossible assignment." What she didn't say was he was well paid for the assignment and some of Chicago's architectural greats would have turned the money down rather than compromise the city.

Wille and others have made the case in print, and undoubtedly behind the scenes, that the mayor's reputation for enhancing the lakefront and the rest of the city's green infrastructure is at stake in this "foolish" project.

One alternative with strong support from lakefront preservationists calls for construction of a new Bears stadium next to Comiskey Park along the Dan Ryan Expressway, west of the lakefront, and the conversion of Soldier Field into a community field. The *Chicago Tribune's* architecture critic Blair Kamin has advocated this approach.

But such suggestions don't address a deeper issue: the city's growing identity crisis. The almost-Celtic chieftancy the Daley family maintained during most of the past quarter century helped to preserve a distinct character that was loved throughout the late 20th century by Hollywood filmmakers, who flocked here in droves to find authentic local color. But it also set us up for a fall when cracks in that image began to appear. Psychologists call this cognitive dissonance, the sense that something may have been going on behind the scenes that's different from what was on the screen. By allowing a corporate logo to be grafted onto an insensitive redesign for Soldier Field, indeed by sending such scions of the Chicago establishment as William Daley and John Schmidt out to push for global trade agreements in the 1990s at a time when Chicago's neighborhoods were hemorrhaging manufacturing jobs, the city's current leadership has shown itself to be more global and less Chicago than it would like to admit.

The default mode, it has become apparent, is the profit margin — and globalization is not merely placeness-

less, but nihilism. "Without God," Dostoevsky once wrote, in prophesying the Russian Revolution, "everything is permitted." As for Chicago, when the young city-in-a-hurry grows old in this post-Cold War world, what traditions will it have to honor? Sony Field anyone?

It is well to remember that part of the unspoken contract between American elites and the people who consume their goods and do their work and fight their wars is that such sacrifices in the civic sphere will be honored. The Soldier Field deal appears to violate that contract. And the loss is endemic. Yet if the bottom line conflicts too much with the illusion of community unity, there is the potential for trouble. Living — as we are told we do by some postmodern scholars — at the end of history, we also are living in the era of chaos theory, where the margins can take center field unexpectedly. Somewhere in back of this sometimes goofy controversy over a stadium, there is after all a real lakefront made of wind, sand and stars, as author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry might have put it.

That becomes clear when we leave an unair-conditioned Rogers Park house on a warm autumn evening, sockless sneakers slapping on cracked sidewalks under tree canopies, moving past buzzing front porches, down old sand dunes toward the lake. Then it seems all around us, even before we reach it.

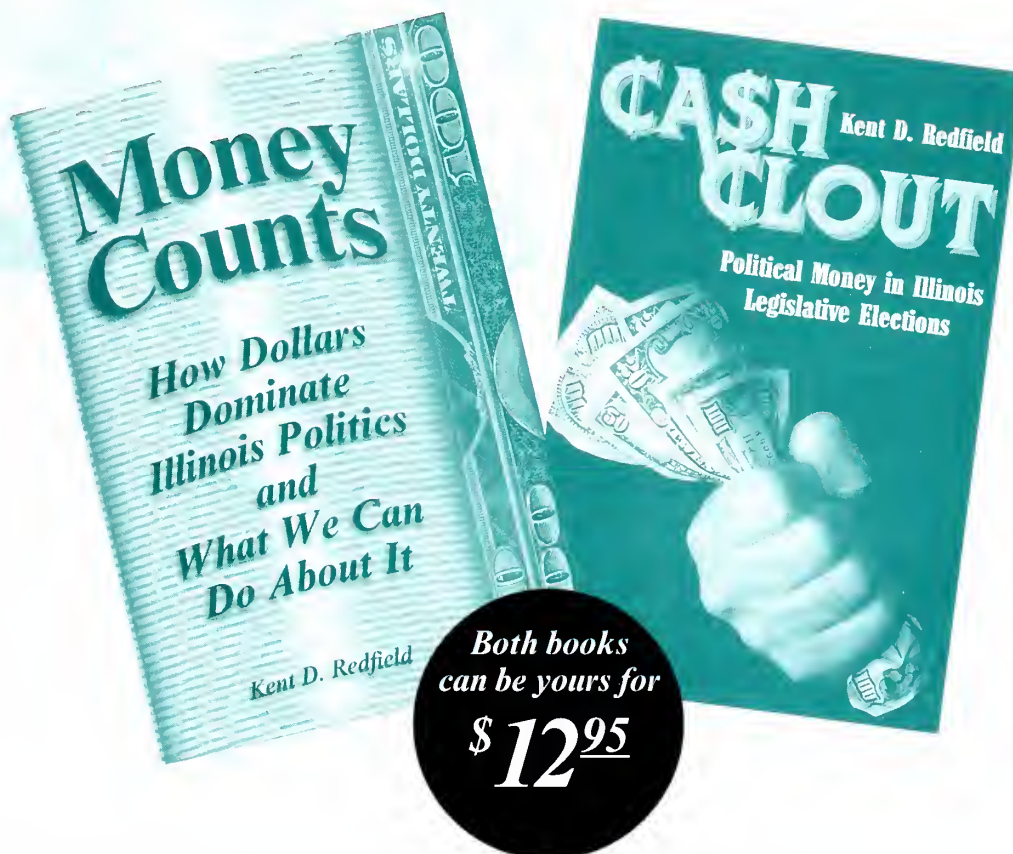
Amid cool breezes and stars and reminders of life's immensities, we can feel the phantom of the lakefront as Native Americans knew it, with its low line of dunes and lonely pines and marshes beyond. Somewhere in such an Indian Summer evening reverie, where the North Woods and the Great Lakes and the tallgrass prairie meet, is the real lakefront, far from Soldier Field and the Burnham Plan and City Hall and the virtual cyberspace of the global economy. Somewhere far from all these lie the margins still more powerful than them all. □

*Alf Siewers, a former Chicagoan and a visiting lecturer specializing in medieval literature at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, writes often on issues of landscape and culture.*



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## SHIFTS AT THE TOP

**Winifred A. Pizzano** is the new director of Gov. George Ryan's Washington, D.C., office. She has served as senior assistant to the governor in that office specializing in health and human services since February. She replaced **Bernie Robinson**, who left in May to join The Livingston Group, a political consulting firm.

**Alan Henry** of Evanston is the new communications director for Comptroller Dan Hynes. Henry is a journalist who was twice nominated for the Pulitzer Prize while working for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. He is the co-author of *Sell Out: The Inside Story of President Clinton's Impeachment*. Hynes, who was Illinois political director for Clinton in the 1996 presidential campaign, intends to seek a second term as comptroller.

Henry replaces **Gail Lobin** of Evanston, who will remain on staff as a part-time special assistant to the comptroller. **Karen Craven** of Springfield is Hyne's press secretary.

**Martha Allen** of Chicago was promoted to chief of staff of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services from her previous position as director of external affairs and senior adviser to the director. Allen had previously worked for the agency as chief of communications from 1993 to 1997, then worked as press secretary for the Illinois Department of Human Services until 1999 when she returned to DCFS.

Allen replaces **Carolyn Cochran Kopel** of Springfield, who left the chief of staff post in June to serve as associate secretary of the Department of Human Services.

**Ellen Feldhausen** of Springfield is the new chief of communications for the Illinois Department of Public Aid. She has been with the Bureau of the Budget for the past 10 years, serving most recently as budget operations division chief and spokeswoman. She replaces **Jo Warfield**, who will work in the agency's training unit.

## New rep and senator set to join state legislature

Republican **Jonathan Wright** of Hartsburg will take a seat as the state representative for central Illinois' 90th District at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

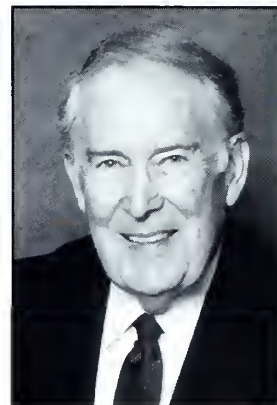
Wright is a lawyer in private practice and also serves as city attorney for Atlanta. He replaces John Turner, who left the legislature in June for the 4th District Appellate Court (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 36). Turner joined the House in 1994.

**Claude "Bud" Stone** of Morton will represent the 45th Senate District, serving out the unexpired term of **Robert Madigan**, who resigned in June. Stone, a retired Caterpillar executive, also serves as Tazewell County Republican Party chairman. The 45th District includes all of Logan, Mason and DeWitt counties and portions of Tazewell, McLean, Piatt and Woodford counties.

Madigan, a Republican from Lincoln, left his seat in the state Senate to serve on the Illinois Industrial Commission, a seven-member body appointed by the governor to administer claims for workers injured or killed while employed by the state. Madigan, if confirmed by the Senate, will earn \$101,790 per year. He had been in the Senate since 1987.



Jonathan Wright



Claude "Bud" Stone

## FEDERAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald recommended federal prosecutor **Miriam Miquelon** to replace **W. Charles Grace** as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Illinois. Miquelon specializes in tax-related crimes and bank fraud for the district, which is based in East St. Louis. She prosecuted Amiel Cueto, a Metro East lawyer and former business partner of U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello, and Thomas Venezia, an East St. Louis topless club owner charged with illegal gambling. They were convicted on several federal charges (see *Illinois Issues*, June 1997, page 41).

Fitzgerald has also recommended **Patrick J. Fitzgerald** (no relation) as the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 38). If nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, he will replace **Scott Lassar**, who left the office at the end of August. Lassar has led the prosecution of people charged in the licenses-for-bribes scandal that occurred in the secretary of state's office under George Ryan. Operation Safe Road has resulted in the prosecution of 43 defendants, 20 of whom are current or former employees of the secretary of state's office; 38 have been convicted and 32 sentenced as of mid-August.

## ILLINOISAN TAPPED

Dr. **Leon R. Kass**, a professor specializing in biomedical ethics at the University of Chicago, will head President George W. Bush's new council on bioethics. The panel will monitor research on embryonic stem cells and recommend guidelines and regulations for federal support. The native Chicagoan was once a molecular biology researcher at the National Institutes of Health.



## New leaders at EPA and Mines and Minerals



Renee Cipriano

**Renee Cipriano** of Chicago is the new director of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. She has been Gov. George Ryan's senior adviser for environment and natural resources since 1999. She worked for the agency as associate director and chief counsel from 1995 to 1997.

She replaced **Thomas Skinner**, who accepted a federal appointment to direct the U.S. EPA's Midwest Region, which is based in Chicago and covers six states.

**Neal Merrifield** is the new director of the Office of Mines and Minerals in the Department of Natural Resources. An engineer, he most recently served as vice president of operations for the Freeman United Coal Mining Co. in Springfield.

## New players on the Gaming Board

Gaming Board Administrator **Sergio Acosta** will return to the U.S. attorney's office as an assistant U.S. attorney in the criminal division. He leaves the board as the controversy over locating a riverboat in Rosemont heats up again.

Gov. George Ryan drew criticism for naming Chicago developer **Elzie Higginbottom** and **Robert Mariano**, former CEO of Dominick's Finer Foods, to the Illinois Gaming Board rather than reappointing **Staci Yandle** and **Sterling Mac Ryder**.

Yandle of East St. Louis and Ryder of Springfield were among the four board who voted to reject a request by the Emerald Casino Inc. for a license it could use to operate a riverboat casino in suburban Rosemont. With the addition of Higginbottom and Mariano, a majority of the five-member board will have had no hand in rejecting the Emerald plan. **Joseph Lamendella**, the one board member who favored granting the request, resigned and was replaced in April by lawyer and lobbyist **Ira Rogal**.

The Rev. **Tom Grey**, executive director of the National Coalition Against Gambling Expansion, charges Ryan with trying to get a board in place that will be more likely to give the go-ahead to a Rosemont casino. "The timing ... should have sent up red flags for George Ryan, and instead it was a green light," he says.

Ryan says by putting new players on the board, he's "infusing it with top flight people who bring new energy, enthusiasm and ideas."

## BIG PEOPLE ON CAMPUS

Eastern Illinois University President **Carol Surles** resigned her post after two years for health reasons. She had surgery for breast cancer a year ago and tests last March revealed the need for more surgery. Surles was Eastern's eighth president and its first female and first black full-time president.

The board of trustees named **Louis Hencken**, vice president for student affairs, as the interim president.

## TRANSITIONS

**Dennis Conrad** and **Ryan Keith**, reporters for The Associated Press, left the Springfield bureau for new assignments. Conrad is the Washington, D.C., correspondent covering the Illinois congressional delegation. Keith is in the AP statehouse bureau in Charleston, West Virginia. **Stephanie McClelland** joined the Statehouse bureau of the Small Newspaper Group. She had worked in Danville for the *News-Gazette*.

## BITS

### William Clark

A former chief justice of the Illinois Supreme court, he died August 17 at the age of 77. As a delegate to the 1968 Democratic National Convention, he co-wrote the party's Peace Plank. In addition to his 16-year tenure on the court, he served in both houses of Illinois' legislature and as its attorney general from 1961 to 1969. He ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate against Everett Dirksen.

### Gale Cincotta

A national housing rights advocate, whose activism began in a desire to protect her West Side Chicago community, she died August 15 at the age of 72. She was behind Congress' passage of laws protecting home buyers.

### Fred Tuerk

A longtime Republican state legislator from Peoria, he died August 16 at the age of 79. He served in the House from 1969 to 1989.

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## LETTERS

### League of Women Voters of Chicago supports punch card ballots

In "Partisanship thwarted any hopes of election reforms in Illinois" (see *Illinois Issues*, July/August, page 42), Charles N. Wheeler III implies that optical scan voting systems are superior to punch card systems. Yet voters make errors with both.

In the 2000 presidential election, Cook County and Chicago used new voting equipment that could have lowered the error rate. When the purchase was being considered, the Chicago League of Women Voters recommended a punch card system over optical scan because squeezing in more than 70 retention judges would mean difficult-to-read type, and because late additions or deletions would require reprinting affected ballots.

The new state-of-the-art punch card system had "second chance" capability: It could have informed voters of over-votes or under-votes. All that was necessary was legislation allowing voters to insert their own ballots. We assumed a bill would be easily passed. How wrong we were. Mr. Wheeler was right on the money: Partisanship thwarted hopes of election reform. The use of a similar "second chance" option for optical scan systems (used in DuPage County) has received legislative approval.

**Emelda L. Estell**  
**President**

**League of Women Voters of Chicago**  
**Terry Williams**  
**Voter Services**  
**League of Women Voters of Chicago**

### Write us

Your comments are welcome. Please keep them brief (250 words). We reserve the right to excerpt them.



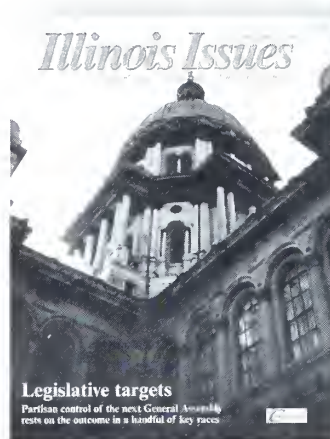
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*Madeline Doubek*



## **An all-suburban GOP governor's primary could be hotly contested**

by *Madeline Doubek*

**T**he Republican-dominated suburbs have never been so fully or richly represented in a race for governor. GOP primary voters may be able to choose from among three suburban-bred candidates whose philosophies run the gamut of suburban Republican politics: Patrick O'Malley, Jim Ryan and Corinne Wood, who was considering a run for governor at presstime.

O'Malley, a state senator from south suburban Palos Park, was the first to announce. A hard-line fiscal and social conservative, he wasted no time spending some of his own wealth on radio ads and billboards to build name recognition. A legislator since 1993, O'Malley hopes to lock in the party's most consistent and reliable primary voters — those who believe as he does that abortion is wrong, taxes are evil, citizens have a right to bear arms and homosexuality is immoral.

Running to O'Malley's immediate left is Ryan, an Elmhurst resident and two-term attorney general. Ryan's August campaign kick-off was a low-key affair in front of the Villa Park home where he was raised Catholic. Like O'Malley, he opposes abortion, including public funding for poor women. Unlike O'Malley, he favors gay rights, some gun restrictions and the death penalty moratorium. A key test for Jim Ryan could be whether his support for the moratorium will help ease some voters' concerns. Ryan attracted negative national and local attention for his role as the county

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*Many Republicans believe their party's nominee must present a moderate image to general election voters.*

prosecutor who pushed to get Rolando Cruz sentenced to death for the murder of young Jeanine Nicarico. Cruz's conviction was overturned and he was among Death Row inmates released as flaws in the death penalty system were uncovered.

Ryan has solid support from DuPage County's top political leaders: Illinois Senate President James "Pate" Philip of Wood Dale and House Republican Leader Lee Daniels of Elmhurst. With \$2 million in the bank at midsummer and two terms as a statewide officeholder under his belt, Ryan is the early front-runner. He's clearly the anointed candidate of the white-male GOP establishment, including Illinois' longest-serving governor, James Thompson.

But the attorney general will not benefit from George Ryan's renowned army of campaign workers after the governor made it clear he was perturbed Jim Ryan went back on an earlier promise to await the incumbent's intentions before jumping into the race.

Instead, George Ryan may well encourage his loyalists to work for the lieutenant governor he plucked from

obscurity in 1998. Corinne Wood, a wealthy Lake Forest lawyer, was a freshman representative with little political experience when Ryan chose her.

The key to a Wood primary victory would be for O'Malley and Ryan to remain in the race and in the thick of a battle for support from the socially conservative Republicans who dominate primaries. She would want them to split support while she woos men and women from the suburbs and elsewhere who make it a priority to support pro-abortion rights candidates.

Many Republicans believe their party's nominee in 2002 must support abortion rights and present a more moderate image to general election voters if they are to have a chance to keep the governor's mansion they've held for more than a quarter century. Jim Ryan acknowledged as much when he took a page from George W. Bush in portraying himself as a compassionate conservative.

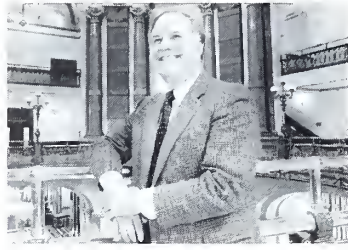
"For the Republicans to elect a governor, the Republican message has to be better received by centrists than it was in 2000," says Bill Atwood, a Chicago Republican and Wood adviser. It will be difficult, he says, for O'Malley and Ryan "to reach into the political middle."

But the political middle doesn't always vote in primaries, notes Barb Murphy, the veteran DuPage County Republican chairwoman. Murphy, a Glen Ellyn resident, is one suburbanite who faces a dilemma in choosing from an all-suburban field. She has known Jim Ryan, and his wife Marie, for 25 years, but she is a strong proponent of abortion rights who says like-minded women will have difficulty backing a candidate like Ryan who makes no exception for women when their lives are threatened or in cases of rape or incest. "When a man says even in the case of your life — I don't value your life — that's tough," Murphy says. "People are saying, 'That goes against my grain. That goes against everything I've stood for my whole life.'"

Such an unusual, three-way, all-suburban GOP governor's primary could easily be the most complex and hotly contested ever. □

*Madeline Doubek is assistant metro editor/projects & politics for the Daily Herald, a suburban newspaper.*

Charles N. Wheeler III



## The governor's departure marks the end of an era in Illinois

by Charles N. Wheeler III

As the 2001 baseball season winds down, fans across the nation are saying farewell to a pair of the game's best, Baltimore Orioles third baseman Cal Ripken Jr. and San Diego Padres outfielder Tony Gwynn.

In similar fashion, the Illinois political scene is losing one of its top performers with the decision by Gov. George Ryan not to seek a second term.

Forcing Ryan's retirement was the lingering licenses-for-bribes scandal that had driven his approval ratings down to the point that winning another term seemed even less likely than an appearance by Ripken or Gwynn in the 2001 World Series.

The governor's coming departure marks the end of an era, as he seems the last in a long line of leaders from both parties to typify the state's traditional political culture. For such old-time pols, holding office meant jobs and contracts and help for friends, never mind party labels. Public policy ought to be set by pragmatic considerations, not ideology. Government's job was to solve problems; thus compromise — aka deal-making — was essential. And loyalty to the boss was unwavering.

Ryan's old-school approach certainly has shaped his tenure as governor, frequently to the consternation of his Republican Party's right wing and to the surprise of the Democratic left.

*For such old-time pols, holding office meant jobs and contracts and help for friends, never mind party labels. Public policy ought to be set by pragmatic considerations, not ideology.*

Consider these high-profile issues:

- **Illinois First.** The \$12 billion public works program is bringing needed improvements to every corner of Illinois. Conservative lawmakers and anti-tax forces condemn Ryan for breaking a campaign pledge not to raise taxes; the governor says he changed his mind in light of the state's deteriorating infrastructure.

- **The death penalty moratorium.** As a state representative, Ryan voted for capital punishment, but as governor, he agonized before allowing the one execution that's occurred on his watch. Afterward, he decided there should be no more until he could be sure safeguards were in place to keep innocent people off Death Row.

- **The Medicaid-funded abortion ban veto.** Anti-abortion forces saw betrayal in Ryan's veto of a measure to prohibit public funding for abortions if only a woman's health — but not her life — were at stake. In his veto message, Ryan said the state should not allow discrimination against poor women. Moreover, he noted in his retirement speech, Medicaid-funded abortions for health reasons, as existing law allows, are not common, and in fact have decreased since the veto.

"I'd make all of these decisions again, without question, because they were the right thing to do," the governor told the hometown crowd in Kankakee. And like his trip to Cuba and his gun control efforts, they were pragmatic, not ideological, choices, true to his political roots.

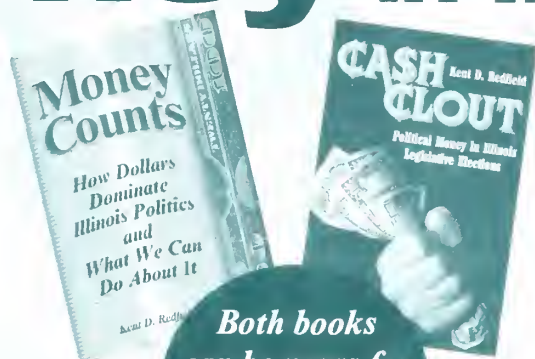
Deal-making is a key component of the culture, of course, and Ryan may be the best practitioner ever among Illinois' 39 governors. But then no chief executive since 1883 had the advantage of being a former House speaker. Besides a 10-year legislative career, Ryan was lieutenant governor and secretary of state, all the while honing his negotiating skills.

As governor, Ryan brokered agreements among warring legislative factions on such issues as a \$3.5 billion aid package for the ailing coal industry, a bill of rights for HMO patients, tighter regulation of factory hog farms and subsidies to lure Boeing's headquarters to Chicago.

The culture also expects one to help out friends, especially those who demonstrate their affection financially. Thus, other deals brought legislation protecting the Wirtz liquor interests, enriching the Duchossois racing empire, sending a lucrative riverboat casino to Rosemont Mayor Donald Stephens, and clearing the way for McCormick Place expansion and a new Soldier Field home for the Chicago Bears. And when the Illinois Gaming Commission nixed Rosemont, Ryan replaced two of the naysayers. Anti-gaming forces saw the switch as a



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nor's campaign war chest, according to Ryan's camp successfully downplayed University of Illinois at Springfield.

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way to revive the Rosemont boat; if they're right, at least credit the governor for keeping his word on the deal.

But the same old-time political values that Ryan has practiced faithfully for some 40 years, from the Kankakee County courthouse to the Executive Mansion, ultimately have proven to be his undoing.

For all his substantial achievements as governor — \$1.5 billion more in school funding, health insurance for 125,000 more low-income kids, some 30,000 acres more of open space — Ryan has not been able to overcome a deep-seated conviction among many of Illinois' citizens that he knew — or was remiss in not knowing — about the rampant corruption in the secretary of state's office during his watch.

To date, 38 people have been convicted of wrongdoing involving selling driver's licenses, including Dean Bauer, a longtime friend whom Ryan named inspector general to root out such wrongdoing. At least \$170,000 of the bribe money went into the governor's campaign war chest, according to

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federal prosecutors.

In the Bauer indictment, prosecutors described a cover-up going back as far as 1993, including blocking an inquiry into whether the trucker involved in a 1994 accident in which six children died had received his license illegally, a charge later substantiated.

The scandal did not come to public light until after the 1998 primary, and Ryan's camp successfully downplayed

the corruption charges through the November election. The first guilty pleas came just days after the governor's victory, though, and the issue has bedeviled him since.

With hindsight's perfect vision, one might wonder what would have happened had Bauer defied the automatic political reflex to circle the wagons and instead pursued the wrongdoing aggressively?

There would have been some bad press, certainly, and perhaps a bit of partisan sniping. But the spinmeisters would have had a good two years before the governor's race to stress how quickly Ryan acted to stamp out corruption and how diligently he fought drunk driving and promoted organ donations and literacy.

Had a few Ryan loyalists dared to buck the seamy side of old-school politics back then, Illinoisans today might well be looking forward to a second term for one of its finest graduates. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*

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